

LORE OF THE KINSFOLK

BOOK III

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A nine-volume anthology edited and compiled by
D.S. BLAIS

First Edition
MMXVII

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For my sons.

*Ac se maga geonga under his maéges scyld elne
geéode þá his ágen wæs glédum forgrunden.*

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Introduction

Lore of the Kinsfolk is a large anthology of literature that reflects the cultural soul and values of our “Germanic,” “Nordic,” and “Celtic” European ancestors. While these ethnic terms are broad and imprecise, they provide sufficient distinction for there exists within their spiritual nexus a markedly different *Weltanschauung* from those of other cultures.

But what is this world-view? What is the true nature of our forefathers, our folk? I take the position that the best way we can discover the answer is through direct experience of their works. Thanks to the availability of their primary sources, we may “hear” the voices of our ancestors once more in their songs, sagas, epics, and chronicles. In this way their histories return to life as their sentiments and wisdom are renewed and reawakened within our own lives.

Until the availability of this compilation, an anthology such as this was lacking. To understand why, let us look at the “Great Books” and “Western Canon.” Though sometimes pilloried as out-moded and archaic, these canonical selections are still taught in many universities and should be considered carefully with a mind to not only what is included, but also what is excluded. Specifically, what is the perspective of the scholar who chooses Adam Smith over Thomas Malory, *Paradise Lost* over the *Song of Roland*, and so on?

The perspective of such a scholar is not at all original, but instead extends tastes which have their origin in the 14th century with the Renaissance and its disparagement of what Petrarch called the “Dark Ages.” There are three chief roots to this mentality, which so displaced our indigenous one and now completely possesses the modern world: (1) the Black Plague which spread with trade and altered the appearance of the world from one of divine order to that of a grim lottery, (2) the “Little Ice Age” that collapsed the agriculture of the Medieval Warm Period, and (3) Levantine trading and lending practices spreading through Europe, especially as the *Reconquista* ended *al-Andalus*. Together these instilled abstracted, rationalistic materialism and erected an irreconcilable barrier between Nature and Self.

As I have argued in *Mysteries of the Obvious*, the penchant and skill of the Jewish people for cosmopolitan trade was formed in the survival strategies of the Near Eastern sociological and climatological milieu following desertification. This climate change was central to the fall of the previous agriculturally-rooted kingdoms of the Near East, as that fertile, orderly, and harmonious natural world was turned to chaos, plunging good and bad alike into the throes of misfortune.

During this time the hostility of natural forces outside of human control led many to a sense of alienation from life; a perception of divine order as either cruel, indifferent, or nonexistent; and a resulting cynical egoistical materialism. The resource scarcity encouraged competition and selfishness as short-term personal opportunism prevailed over long-term social good, practical strategies in a starving land filled with predatory raiders. When the Black Plague and climate change occurred in Europe, a similar shift in the perception of Nature followed, most especially in the cities where the links to Her spirit were already tenuous and it is indeed in the cities of northern Italy that we first see the resolve of the old European spirit crumble into ruin.

The Jewish merchants and moneylenders who entered Florence found their Gentile champions in the Medici family, who pro-

tested and encouraged the Jewish population and trade practices. The House of Medici, bankrolled by the Jewish moneylenders whose wealth greatly expanded in the Islamic “Golden Age,” became exceedingly rich and powerful. The Medici possessed the largest bank in Europe through the 15th century, sired three popes and many royals, and lent to avaricious royalty throughout Europe.

Jewish collaboration with Gentiles towards international corporatism or imperialism may be found earlier in Rome, among the Muslim Caliphates, onwards through Europe via the Renaissance and Enlightenment, and ongoing in this corrupt age of Modernity. The style of Jewish-Gentile partnership capitalizes on the respective strengths of Jewish financial acumen and legalism in conjunction with Gentile military and industrial power. Contrary to the rhetoric of simplistic anti-Semites, this situation is not due to manipulation or exploitation on the part of the Jews, but transparently achieves precisely what both collaborating parties want, namely power and wealth — of exaggerated importance in desperate times as with decaying Rome or plague-ridden Europe.

Though the oligarchs thereby advance, the congress of commercial enterprise is not without its casualties and detractors, and perhaps no values are truly more antithetical to it than those of our European ancestors. Our concepts of Honor and Love are entirely opposed to the peddler’s *ethos*; the basis of the former is Nature and the deep sense of belonging to Her, while that of the latter is a rationalistic abstraction of life and spirituality entirely away from our Earthly origin to an abstract conception of Universe and Self. These two world views are not simply different perspectives of the same truth, but two diametrically opposed directions of the soul to or away from the real, living natural world.

Chivalry cannot abide Capitalism, nor the contrary. To defeat the obstacle posed to trade, the merchant must disarm the knight; neuter the old concepts of masculinity and femininity; replace “person” with “consumer;” mock sacrifice, loyalty, and honor; and endlessly advertise the Self over the Folk, that is, the individual over their larger sense of belonging within Nature.

Thus it is was that Petrarch, the Tuscan father of Renaissance, was to first describe the previous era as the “Dark Age” (i.e. *saeculum obscurum*), elevating the Greeks and Romans of antiquity while debasing the European successors as ignorant primitives. The Renaissance is the reaction that he and other Northern Italians, informed by cynicism derived of pestilence and famine, initially fashioned in choosing the glittering ephemerality of wealthy and decadent past empires over the ancestral European outlook. While the ancestral outlook could be characterized as ultimately based on the intimate faith in Nature’s inherent goodness and correctness (i.e. the harmonious expression of the divine in the Middle World), the future mentality was utterly aloof from such pedestrianly mundane notions of God, Soul, and Nature.

The New Man of commerce, technology, and imperialism would spread the inticements of the Jews and their imitative collaborators into Belgium, Amsterdam, England, and throughout Europe, promoting his cosmopolitan oligarchical *ethos* everywhere he went. Fresh imperialism caught on fire, profitable colonies were established overseas, ruthless slavery came back into vogue, the cruel Jehovah replaced the compassionate Christ — and subsequently was entirely displaced with Spinoza, Hobbes, Diderot, *et al* — and thereafter all “enlightened” people only

looked with embarrassment and contempt upon those ridiculous old views of the past.

And, so it is that conventional scholars ever since may find Shakespeare's street-smart wit or Cervantes' satirical mocking palatable, but reject the Matter of Britain as unworthy of canonical inclusion. Mortimer J. Alder's famed *Great Books of the Western World* well demonstrates this myopia. After eighteen massive volumes of classical works, not a single piece is included from the eight hundred years spanning Augustine to Aquinas! The modern corruption of value is so great that hundreds of pages of pointless astronomical tables from Kepler and Copernicus are included, but not a paragraph of the Nordic Sagas. And, why but because science and technology are so exceptionally valued in our present society — not due to an innate love of Natural Philosophy or Natural History, but because of their singular utility to commercial advantage!

Some have cast this conflict as a theological one, positing that the Church stifled creativity and imagination prior to the Renaissance. This belief reveals a tremendous myth in the historical understanding of the Christian religion, one that the religion's defenders and detractors both like to perpetuate: that the Christian religion of the Middle Ages is the same slavish, biblical creed as that of today, ignoring the hidden truth of the Reformation. In actuality, the historical Christianity of our ancestors was far more a reflection and furtherance of their own inherent nature than the supposed alien imposition of a Jewish sect.

To understand this, let us consider some facts. Once Imperial Rome had sufficiently weakened due to their own decadence and overreaching dilution, our kinsmen, the Visigoths, sacked Rome and German law, as with the *Visigothic Code*, replaced Roman law over the Western stretches of the former Roman Empire. Unlike the Roman subjects of Constantine *et al*, Christianity was not imposed on the ruling tribes or their kinsmen, but voluntarily adopted over time by the Northern peoples.

Why did Christianity appeal to them? Christianity was, from the beginning, a highly accessible and universal theological system formed from a mosaic of other beliefs including Roman paganism, Mithraism, Stoicism, and Buddhism. Until the dogmatism of the philo-Semitic Puritans and their restoration of Old Testament legalism, Christianity in practice was largely a matter of adopting what most resonated with the believer as variously realized from sect to sect, people to people. Our ancestors could see the strong similarities in the astro-theological underpinnings of Christianity to their heathen systems which had thousands of years travelled with them in their migration from the winnowing agricultural lands of the Near East. Free to adapt Christianity as they wished, they accepted and encouraged what they found interesting, useful, and true, while simultaneously preserving their own beliefs and practices. This was very much like the Roman's espousal of Greek mythology, and they were free to fit the religion to the mold they wished so that it was additive to, rather than subtractive from their own extant philosophies.

This adaption occurred in just the same manner as when the Franks adopted and shaped the Latin language into what we now know as French. Valuing Latin's vocabulary, grammar, literature, and wide usage, the Franks, Burgundians, *et al* repurposed the Roman's language for their own expressive goals, preserving Germanic linguistic traits but, more importantly, the overall personality of their own folk. Thus, Christianity through the Middle Ages, while not a Germanic invention, was a Germanic (and Celtic) *adaptation* of a flexible, complex religion into their own existing spiritual frameworks, from the Yggdrasil tree of salvation to the Celtic Cross.

A tremendous example of this is given us by the *Heliand*, the Saxon gospel of the 9th century. After the tyrannical behavior of Charlemagne towards the Saxons, a different approach by the Frankish Christians was used to convert the remaining pagans. Radically dissimilar from the conventional gospels of Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John, the Saxon gospel has a great many divergences from the traditional story of Jesus, portraying him and his Apostles as honorable and brave warriors. Jesus himself is shown as a heroic warrior chief imbued with pagan magical ability, his story a strong fusion of Germanic and early Christian *mythoi*.

As with Christianity, the ideas of our ancestors being generally brutish and cruel, predisposed to early deaths, and acutely scientifically ignorant are wholly in error. Fortunately, this older view of medievalism, so widely propagated by the Renaissance and its followers, has been undergoing a significant revisionism at the hands of some academics. This began with the Romantics, themselves a reaction to the inhumanity of modernity and industrialism, many of whom embraced the spirit of the past and sought to continue its traditions into their own time.

In fact, the true nature of our ancestral character is shown by its honorableness, compassion, piety, idealism, humaneness, and vigor. As such, it reflects the best aspects of the continued soul of our European folk. For the truth is that the so-called "Dark Ages" were really the *Living Ages*, as every interaction was with an intelligent, organismic entity and perceived as within a like-wise Holism. Whereas commercial and, now, mechanical interactions have robbed life of its natural depth, our past kinsfolk lived fully amidst its inherent living complexity. For our ancestors, all of the world was an orderly, living organism, interdependent and related; all the world was a manifestation of the living nature god-head.

The Greeks and Romans were both peoples originally from the North, both spoke Indo-European languages, and both had many cultural traits familiar to our own. This connection is particularly evident with the Romans, and it was a difficult decision to omit works by the Romans, including Virgil's *Aeneid*, Plutarch's *Lives*, the especially insightful works by Julius Caesar and Tacitus on Gaul and Germania, and so on. Likewise, there are strong relations to be found in Slavic literature and such Eastern European history as Nestor's *Tales of Past Years*, but a choice was made to specifically feature the continuous inner path of the Western and Northern Europeans, in no small part because the *Lore* already exceeds 5,000,000 words. Perhaps these deficiencies and others will be remedied in future editions.

The fundamental nature of reality and our own spiritual instincts remain the same as when our ancestors wrote the works that follow. All that has really changed are the form and pervasiveness of the illusions and confutations we face. We can find inspiration in the like-minded revival of the old truths by certain Romantics, several of whom are included in the latter sections of the *Lore* for the beauty and authenticity of their continuations. These recent ancestors remind us that we can today still listen to and learn from the wisdom of our ancient kinsmen, and thereby rekindle within our hearts the truth of our blood, our world, and our soul.

Not only *can* we do this, but this what we *must* do! For it is the path back to reality, back to truth, and back to Nature in all of Her beautiful splendor. The works in the *Lore* are not merely historical relics; they are a sacred heirloom which has been passed to you so that you may live as accords your natural being. Listen to the *Lore of the Kinsfolk* and hear in the spirits of your ancestors your own living nature. And for you who hearken to the call of your forefathers, may their words cause your heart and mind to follow the wisdom of heroes over the wending path of time and fate.

— D.S. Blais, Vinland, December 2017

Elder Edda

VÖLUSPÁ. THE VALA'S PROPHECY.

1. For silence I pray all sacred children, great and small, sons of Heimdall, they will that I Valfather's deeds recount, men's ancient saws, those that I best remember.

2. The Jötuns I remember early born, those who me of old have reared. I nine worlds remember, nine trees, the great central tree, beneath the earth.

3. There was in times of old, where Ymir dwelt, nor sand nor sea, nor gelid waves; earth existed not, nor heaven above, 'twas a chaotic chasm, and grass nowhere.

4. Before Bur's sons raised up heaven's vault, they who the noble mid-earth shaped. The sun shone from the south over the structure's rocks: then was the earth begrown with herbage green.

5. The sun from the south, the moon's companion, her right hand cast about the heavenly horses. The sun knew not where she a dwelling had, the moon knew not what power he possessed, the stars knew not where they had a station.

6. Then went the powers all to their judgment-seats, the all-holy gods, and thereon held council: to night and to the waning moon gave names; morn they named, and mid-day, afternoon and eve, whereby to reckon years.

7. The Æsir met on Ida's plain; they altar-steads and temples high constructed; their strength they proved, all things tried, furnaces established, precious things forged, formed tongs, and fabricated tools;

8. At tables played at home; joyous they were; to them was naught the want of gold, until there came Thurs-maidens three, all powerful, from Jötunheim.

9. Then went all the powers to their judgment-seats, the all-holy gods, and thereon held council, who should of the dwarfs the race create, from the sea-giant's blood and livid bones.

10. Then was Mótsognir created greatest of all the dwarfs, and Durin second; there in man's likeness they created many dwarfs from earth, as Durin said.

11. Nýi and Nidi, Nordri and Sudri, Austri and Vestri, Althiöf, Dvalin Nár and Nâin, Niping, Dain, Bivör, Bavör, Bömbur, Nori, An and Anar, Ai, Miodvitnir,

12. Veig and Gandálf, Vindálf, Thrain, Thekk and Thorin, Thrör, Vittr, and Littr, Nür and Nýräd, Regin and Rádsvid. Now of the dwarfs I have rightly told.

13. Fili, Kili, Fundin, Nali, Hepti, Vili, Hanar, Svior, Billing, Bruni, Bild, Büri, Frär, Hornbori, Fræg and Lóni, Aurvang, Iari, Eikinskialdi.

14. Time 'tis of the dwarfs in Dvalin's band, to the sons of men, to Lofar up to reckon, those who came forth from the world's rock, earth's foundation, to Iora's plains.

15. There were Draupnir, and Dölgthrasir, Hår, Haugspori, Hlævang, Glöi, Skirvir, Virvir, Skafid, Ai, Alf and Yngvi, Eikinskialdi,

16. Fialar and Frosti, Finn and Ginnar, Heri, Höggstari, Hliödölf, Moin: that above shall, while mortals live, the progeny of Lofar, accounted be.

17. Until there came three mighty and benevolent Æsir to the world from their assembly. They found on earth, nearly powerless, Ask and Embla, void of destiny.

18. Spirit they possessed not, sense they had not, blood nor motive powers, nor goodly colour. Spirit gave Odin, sense gave Hoenir, blood gave Lodur, and goodly colour.

19. I know an ash standing Yggdrasil hight, a lofty tree, laved with limpid water: thence come the dews into the dales that fall; ever stands it green over Urd's fountain.

20. Thence come maidens, much knowing, three from the hall, which under that tree stands; Urd hight the one, the second Verdandi,—on a tablet they graved—Skuld the third. Laws they established, life allotted to the sons of men; destinies pronounced.

21. Alone she sat without, when came that ancient dread Æsir's prince; and in his eye she gazed.

22. "Of what wouldst thou ask me? Why temptest thou me? Odin! I know all, where thou thine eye didst sink in the pure well of Mim." Mim drinks mead each morn from Valfather's pledge. Understand ye yet, or what?

23. The chief of hosts gave her rings and necklace, useful discourse, and a divining spirit: wide and far she saw o'er every world.

24. She the Valkyriur saw from afar coming, ready to ride to the god's people: Skuld held a shield, Sköglul was second, then Gunn, Hild Göndul, and Geirsköglul. Now are enumerated Herian's maidens, the Valkyriur, ready over the earth to ride.

25. She that war remembers, the first on earth, when Gullveig they with lances pierced, and in the high one's hall her burnt, thrice burnt, thrice brought her forth, oft not seldom; yet she still lives.

26. Heidi they called her, whitherso'er she came, the well-foreseeing Vala: wolves she tamed, magic arts she knew, magic arts practised; ever was she the joy of evil people.

27. Then went the powers all to their judgment-seats, the all-holy gods, and thereon held council, whether the Æsir should avenge the crime, or all the gods receive atonement.

28. Broken was the outer wall of the Æsir's burgh. The Vanir, foreseeing conflict, tramp o'er the plains. Odin cast [his spear], and mid the people hurled it: that was the first warfare in the world.

29. Then went the powers all to their judgment-seats, the all-holy gods, and thereon held council: who had all the air with evil mingled? or to the Jötun race Od's maid had given?

30. There alone was Thor with anger swollen. He seldom sits, when of the like he hears. Oaths are not held sacred; nor words, nor swearing, nor binding compacts reciprocally made.

31. She knows that Heimdall's horn is hidden under the heaven-bright holy tree. A river she sees flow, with foamy fall, from Valfather's pledge. Understand ye yet, or what?

32. East sat the crone, in Iárnvidir, and there reared up Fenrir's progeny: of all shall be one especially the moon's devourer, in a troll's semblance.

33. He is sated with the last breath of dying men; the god's seat he with red gore defiles: swart is the sunshine then for summers after; all weather turns to storm. Understand ye yet, or what?

34. There on a height sat, striking a harp, the giantess's watch, the joyous Egdir; by him crowed, in the bird-wood, the bright red cock, which Fialar hight.

35. Crowed o'er the Æsir Gullinkambi, which wakens heroes with the sire of hosts; but another crows beneath the earth, a soot-red cock, in the halls of Hel.

36. I saw of Baldr, the blood-stained god, Odin's son, the hidden fate. There stood grown up, high on the plain, slender and passing fair, the mistletoe.

37. From that shrub was made, as to me it seemed, a deadly, noxious dart. Hödr shot it forth; but Frigg bewailed, in Fensalir, Valhall's calamity. Understand ye yet, or what?

38. Bound she saw lying, under Hveralund, a monstrous form, to Loki like. There sits Sigyn, for her consort's sake, not right glad. Understand ye yet, or what?

39. Then the Vala knew the fatal bonds were twisting, most rigid, bonds from entrails made.

40. From the east a river falls, through venom dales, with mire and clods, Slid is its name.

41. On the north there stood, on Nida-fells, a hall of gold, for Sindri's race; and another stood in Okólnir, the Jötuns beer-hall which Brímir hight.

42. She saw a hall standing, far from the sun, in Nāströnd; its doors are northward turned, venom-drops fall in through its apertures: entwined is that hall with serpents' backs.

43. She there saw wading the sluggish streams bloodthirsty men and perjurers, and him who the ear beguiles of another's wife. There Nidhögg sucks the corpses of the dead; the wolf tears men. Understand ye yet, or what?

44. Further forward I see, much can I say of Ragnarök and the gods' conflict.

45. Brothers shall fight, and slay each other; cousins shall kinship violate. The earth resounds, the giantesses flee; no man will another spare.

46. Hard is it in the world, great whoredom, an axe age, a sword age, shields shall be cloven, a wind age, a wolf age, ere the world sinks.

47. Mim's sons dance, but the central tree takes fire at the resounding Giallar-horn. Loud blows Heimdall, his horn is raised; Odin speaks with Mim's head.

48. Trembles Yggdrasil's ash yet standing; groans that aged tree, and the jötun is loosed. Loud bays Garm before the Gnupa-cave, his bonds he rends asunder; and the wolf runs.

49. Hrym steers from the east, the waters rise, the mundane snake is coiled in jötun-rage. The worm beats the water, and the eagle screams: the pale of beak tears carcasses; Naglfar is loosed.

50. That ship fares from the east: come will Muspell's people o'er the sea, and Loki steers. The monster's kin goes all with the wolf; with them the brother is of Byleist on their course.

51. Surt from the south comes with flickering flame; shines from his sword the Val-gods' sun. The stony hills are dashed together, the giantesses totter; men tread the path of Hel, and heaven is cloven.

52. How is it with the Æsir? How with the Alfar? All Jötunheim resounds; the Æsir are in council. The dwarfs groan before their stony doors, the sages of the rocky walls. Understand ye yet, or what?

53. Then arises Hlin's second grief, when Odin goes with the wolf to fight, and the bright slayer of Beli with Surt. Then will Frigg's beloved fall.

54. Then comes the great victor-sire's son, Vidar, to fight with the deadly beast. He with his hands will make his sword pierce to the heart of the giant's son: then avenges he his father.

55. Then comes the mighty son of Hlódyn: (Odin's son goes with the monster to fight); Midgård's Veor in his rage will slay the worm. Nine feet will go Fiörgyn's son, bowed by the serpent, who feared no foe. All men will their homes forsake.

56. The sun darkens, earth in ocean sinks, fall from heaven the bright stars, fire's breath assails the all-nourishing tree, towering fire plays against heaven itself.

57. She sees arise, a second time, earth from ocean, beautifully green, waterfalls descending; the eagle flying over, which in the fell captures fish.

58. The Æsir meet on Ida's plain, and of the mighty earth-encircler speak, and there to memory call their mighty deeds, and the supreme god's ancient lore.

59. There shall again the wondrous golden tables in the grass be found, which in days of old had possessed the ruler of the gods, and Fiöllnir's race.

60. Unsown shall the fields bring forth, all evil be amended; Baldr shall come; Hödr and Baldr, the heavenly gods, Hropt's glorious dwellings shall inhabit. Understand ye yet, or what?

61. Then can Hoenir choose his lot, and the two brothers' sons inhabit the spacious Vindheim. Understand ye yet, or what?

62. She a hall standing than the sun brighter, with gold bedecked, in Gimill: there shall be righteous people dwell, and for evermore happiness enjoy.

64. Then comes the mighty one to the great judgment, the powerful from above, who rules o'er all. He shall dooms pronounce, and strifes allay, holy peace establish, which shall ever be.

65. There comes the dark dragon flying from beneath the glistening serpent, from Nida-fels. On his wings bears Nidhögg, flying o'er the plain, a corpse. Now she will descend.

THE LAY OF VAFTHRUDNIR.

Odin visits the Giant (Jötun) Vafthrúdnir, for the purpose of proving his knowledge. They propose questions relative to the Cosmogony of the Northern creed, on the conditions that the baffled party forfeit his head. The Jötun incurs the penalty.

Odin:

1. Counsel thou me now, Frigg! as I long to go Vafthrúdnir to visit; great desire, I say, I have, in ancient lore with that all-wise Jötun to contend.

Frigg:

2. At home to bide Hærfather I would counsel, in the gods' dwellings; because no Jötun is, I believe, so mighty as is Vafthrúdnir.

Odin:

3. Much have I journeyed, much experienced, mighty ones many proved; but this I fain would know, how in Vafthrúdnir's halls it is.

Frigg:

4. In safety mayest thou go, in safety return; in safety on thy journeyings be; may thy wit avail thee, when thou, father of men! shalt hold converse with the Jötun.

5. Then went Odin the lore to prove of that all-wise Jötun. To the hall he came which Im's father owned. Ygg went forthwith in.

Odin:

6. Hail to thee, Vafthrúdnir! to thy hall I am now come, thyself to see; for I fain would know, whether thou art a cunning and all-wise Jötun.

Vafthrúdnir:

7. What man is this, that in my habitation by word addresses me? Out thou goest not from our halls, if thou art not the wiser.

Odin:

8. Gagnrād is my name, from my journey I am come thirsty to thy halls, needing hospitality,—for I long have journeyed—and kind reception from thee, Jötun!

Vafthrúdnir:

9. Why then, Gagnrād! speakest thou from the floor? Take in the hall a seat; then shall be proved which knows most, the guest or the ancient talker.

Gagnrād:

10. A poor man should, who to a rich man comes, speak usefully or hold his tongue: over-much talk brings him, I ween, no good, who visits an austere man.

Vafthrúdnir:

11. Tell me, Gagnrād! since on the floor thou wilt prove thy proficiency, how the horse is called that draws each day forth over human kind?

Gagnrād:

12. Skinfaxi he is named, that the bright day draws forth over human kind. Of coursers he is best accounted among the Reidgoths. Ever sheds light that horse's mane.

Vafthrúdnir:

13. Tell me now, Gagnrād! since on the floor thou wilt prove thy proficiency, how that steed is called, which from the east draws night o'er the beneficent powers?

Gagnrād:

14. Hrimfaxi he is called, that each night draws forth over the beneficent powers. He from his bit lets fall drops every morn, whence in the dales comes dew.

Vafthrúdnir:

15. Tell me, Gagnrād! since on the floor thou wilt prove thy profi-

ciency, how the stream is called, which earth divides between the Jötuns and the Gods?

Gagnrâd:

16. Ifing the stream is called which earth divides between the Jötuns and the Gods: open shall it run throughout all time. On that stream no ice shall be.

Vafthrúdnir:

17. Tell me, Gagnrâd! since on the floor thou wilt prove thy proficiency, how that plain is called, where in fight shall meet Surt and the gentle Gods?

Gagnrâd:

18. Vigrid the plain is called where in fight shall meet Surt and the gentle Gods; a hundred rasts it is on every side. That plain is to them decreed.

Vafthrúdnir:

19. Wise art thou, O guest! Approach the Jötuns bench, and sitting let us together talk; we will our heads in the hall pledge, guest! for wise utterance.

Gagnrâd:

20. Tell me first, if thy wit suffices, and thou, Vafthrúdnir! knowest, whence first came the earth, and the high heaven, thou, sagacious Jötun?

Vafthrúdnir:

21. From Ymir's flesh the earth was formed, and from his bones the hills, the heaven from the skull of that ice-cold giant, and from his blood the sea.

Gagnrâd:

22. Tell me secondly, if thy wit suffices, and thou, Vafthrúdnir! knowest, whence came the moon, which over mankind passes, and the sun likewise?

Vafthrúdnir:

23. Mundilfoeri hight he, who the moon's father is, and eke the sun's: round heaven journey each day they must, to count years for men.

Gagnrâd:

24. Tell me thirdly, since thou art called wise, and if thou, Vafthrúdnir! knowest, whence came the day, which over people passes, and night with waning moons?

Vafthrúdnir:

25. Delling hight he who the day's father is, but night was of Nörvi born; the new and waning moons the beneficent powers created, to count years for men.

Gagnrâd:

26. Tell me fourthly, since they pronounce thee sage, and if thou, Vafthrúdnir! knowest, whence winter came, and warm summer first among the wise gods?

Vafthrúdnir:

27. Vindsval hight he, who winter's father is, and Svásud summer's; yearly they both shall ever journey, until the powers perish.

Gagnrâd:

28. Tell me fifthly, since they pronounce thee sage, and if thou, Vafthrúdnir! knowest, which of the Æsir earliest, or of Ymir's sons, in days of old existed?

Vafthrúdnir:

29. Countless winters, ere earth was formed, was Bergelmir born; Thrúdgelmir was his sire, his grandsire Aurgelmir.

Gagnrâd:

30. Tell me sixthly, since thou art called wise, and if thou, Vafthrúdnir! knowest, whence first came Aurgelmir, among the Jötun's sons, thou sagacious Jötun?

Vafthrúdnir:

31. From Elivâgar sprang venom drops, which grew till they became a Jötun; but sparks flew from the south-world: to the ice the fire gave life.

Gagnrâd:

33. Tell me seventhly, since thou are called wise, and if thou knowest, Vafthrúdnir! how he children begat, the bold Jötun, as he had no giantess's company?

Vafthrúdnir:

33. Under the armpit grew, 'tis said, of the Hrimthurs, a girl and boy together; foot with foot begat, of that wise Jötun, a six-headed son.

Gagnrâd:

34. Tell me eighthly, since thou art called wise, and if thou knowest, Vafthrúdnir! what thou doest first remember, or earliest knowest? Thou art an all-wise Jötun.

Vafthrúdnir:

35. Countless winters, ere earth was formed, Bergelmir was born. That I first remember, when that wise Jötun in an ark was laid.

Gagnrâd:

36. Tell me ninthly, since thou art called wise, and if thou knowest, Vafthrúdnir! whence the wind comes, that over ocean passes, itself invisible to man?

Vafthrúdnir:

37. Hraesvelg he is called, who at the end of heaven sits, a Jötun in an eagle's plumage: from his wings comes, it is said, the wind, that over all men passes.

Gagnrâd:

38. Tell me tenthly, since thou all the origin of the gods knowest, Vafthrúdnir! whence Niörd came among the Æsir's sons? O'er fanes and offer-steeds he rules by hundreds, yet was not among the Æsir born.

Vafthrúdnir:

39. In Vanaheim wise powers him created, and to the gods a hostage gave. At the world's dissolution, he will return to the wise Vanir.

Gagnrâd:

40. Tell me eleventhly, since all the condition of the gods thou knowest, Vafthrúdnir! what the Einheriar do in Haerfather's halls, until the powers perish?

Vafthrúdnir:

41. All the Einheriar in Odin's halls each day together fight; the fallen they choose, and from the conflict ride; beer with the Æsir drink, of Saehrimnir eat their fill, then sit in harmony together.

Gagnrâd:

42. Tell me twelfthly, as thou all the condition of the gods knowest, Vafthrúdnir! of the Jötuns' secrets, and of all the gods', say what truest is, thou all-knowing Jötun!

Vafthrúdnir:

43. Of the secrets of the Jötuns and of all the gods, I can truly tell; for I have over each world travelled; to nine worlds I came, to Niflhel beneath: here die men from Hel.

Gagnrâd:

44. Much have I journeyed, much experienced, mighty ones many proved. What mortals will live, when the great "Fimbul"-winter shall from men have passed?

Vafthrúdnir:

45. Lif and Lifthrasir; but they will be concealed in Hoddmimir's holt. The morning dew they will have for food. From, them shall men be born.

Gagnrâd:

46. Much have I journeyed, much experienced, mighty ones many proved. Whence will come the sun in that fair heaven, when Fenrir has this devoured?

Vafthrúdnir:

47. A daughter shall Alfröðull bear, ere Fenrir shall have swallowed her. The maid shall ride, when the powers die, on her mother's course.

Gagnrâd:

48. Much have I journeyed, etc. Who are the maidens that o'er the ocean travel, wise of spirit, journey?

Vafthrúdnir:

49. O'er people's dwellings three descend of Mögthrasir's maidens, the sole Hamingjur who are in the world, although with Jötuns nurtured.

Gagnrâd:

50. Much have I journeyed, etc. Which of the Æsir will rule o'er the gods' possession, when Surt's fire shall be quenched?

Vafthrúdnir:

51. Vidar and Vali will the gods' holy fanes inhabit, when Surt's fire shall be quenched. Môdi and Magni will Miöllnir possess, and warfare strive to end.

Gagnrâd:

52. Much have I journeyed, etc. What of Odin will the life's end be, when the powers perish?

Vafthrúdnir:

53. The wolf will the father of men devour; him Vidar will avenge: he his cold jaws will cleave, in conflict with the wolf.

Gagnrād:

54. Much have I journeyed, etc. What said Odin in his son's ear, ere he on the pile was laid?

Vafthrúdnir:

55. That no one knoweth, what thou in days of old saidst in thy son's ear. With dying mouth my ancient saws I have said, and the gods' destruction. With Odin I have contended in wise utterances: of men thou ever art the wisest!

THE LAY OF GRIMNIR.

The subject is wholly mythological.

King Hraudung had two sons, one named Agnar, the other Geirröd. Agnar was ten, and Geirröd eight winters old. They both rowed out in a boat, with their hooks and lines, to catch small fish; but the wind drove them out to sea. In the darkness of the night they were wrecked on the shore, and went up into the country, where they found a cottager, with whom they stayed through the winter. The cottager's wife brought up Agnar, and the cottager, Geirröd, and gave him good advice. In the spring the man got them a ship; but when he and his wife accompanied them to the strand, the man talked apart with Geirröd. They had a fair wind, and reached their father's place. Geirröd was at the ship's prow: he sprang on shore, but pushed the ship out, saying, "Go where an evil spirit may get thee." The vessel was driven out to sea, but Geirröd went up to the town, where he was well received; but his father was dead. Geirröd was then taken for king, and became a famous man.

Odin and Frigg were sitting in Hlidskiälf, looking over all the world. Odin said, "Seest thou Agnar, thy foster-son, where he is, getting children with a giantess in a cave? while Geirröd, my foster-son, is a king residing in his country." Frigg answered, "He is so inhos pitable that he tortures his guests, if he thinks that too many come." Odin replied that that was the greatest falsehood; and they wagered thereupon. Frigg sent her waiting-maid Fulla to bid Geirröd be on his guard, lest the trollmann who was coming should do him harm, and also say that a token whereby he might be known was, that no dog, however fierce, would attack him. But that King Geirröd was not hospitable was mere idle talk. He, nevertheless, caused the man to be secured whom no dog would assail. He was clad in a blue cloak, and was named Grimnir, and would say no more concerning himself, although he was questioned. The king ordered him to be tortured to make him confess, and to be set between two fires; and there he sat for eight nights. King Geirröd had a son ten years old, whom he named Agnar, after his brother. Agnar went to Grimnir and gave him a full horn to drink from, saying that the king did wrong in causing him to be tortured, though innocent. Grimnir drank from it. The fire had then so approached him that his cloak was burnt; whereupon he said:—

1. Fire! thou art hot, and much too great; flame! let us separate. My garment is singed, although I lift it up, my cloak is scorched before it.

2. Eight nights have I sat between fires here, and to me no one food has offered, save only Agnar, the son of Geirröd, who alone shall rule over the land of Goths.

3. Be thou blessed, Agnar! as blessed as the god of men bids thee to be. For one draught thou never shalt get better recompense.

4. Holy is the land, which I see lying to Æsir and Alfarr near; but in Thrúðheim Thor shall dwell until the powers perish.

5. Ydalir it is called, where Ullr has himself a dwelling made. Alfheim the gods to Frey gave in days of yore for a tooth-gift.

6. The third dwelling is, where the kind powers have with silver decked the hall; Valaskiälf 'tis called, which for himself acquired the As in days of old.

7. Sökkvabekk the fourth is named o'er which the gelid waves resound; Odin and Saga there, joyful each day, from golden beakers quaff.

8. Gladsheim the fifth is named, there the golden-bright Valhall stands spacious, there Hropt selects each day those men who die by weapons.

9. Easily to be known is, by those who to Odin come, the mansion by its aspect. Its roof with spears is laid, its hall with shields is decked, with corslets are its benches strewed.

10. Easily to be known is, by those who to Odin come, the mansion by its aspect. A wolf hangs before the western door, over it an eagle hovers.

11. Thrymheim the sixth is named, where Thiassi dwelt that all-powerful Jötun; but Skadi now inhabits, the bright bride of gods, her father's ancient home.

12. Breidablik is the seventh, where Baldr has built for himself a hall, in that land, in which I know exists the fewest crimes.

13. Himinbiörg is the eighth, where Heimdall, it is said, rules o'er the holy fanes: there the gods' watchman, in his tranquil home, drinks joyful the good mead.

14. Fölkvang is the ninth, there Freyia directs the sittings in the hall. She half the fallen chooses each day, but Odin th' other half.

15. Glitnir is the tenth; it is on gold sustained, and eke with silver decked. There Forseti dwells throughout all time, and every strife allays.

16. Nóaatún is the eleventh, there Niörd has himself a dwelling made, prince of men; guiltless of sin, he rules o'er the high-built fane.

17. O'ergrown with branches and high grass is Vidar's spacious Landvði: There will the son descend, from the steed's back, bold to avenge his father.

18. Andhrimnir makes, in Eldhrimnir, Sæhrimnir to boil, of meats the best; but few know how many Einheriar it feeds.

19. Geri and Freki the war-wont sates, the triumphant sire of hosts; but on wine only the famed in arms, Odin, ever lives.

20. Hugin and Munin fly each day over the spacious earth. I fear for Hugin, that he come not back, yet more anxious am I for Munin.

21. Thund roars; joyful in Thiodvitnir's water lives the fish; the rapid river seems too great for the battle-steed to ford.

22. Valgrind is the lattice called, in the plain that stands, holy before the holy gates: ancient is that lattice, but few only know how it is closed with lock.

23. Five hundred doors, and forty eke, I think, are in Valhall. Eight hundred Einheriar will at once from each door go when they issue with the wolf to fight.

24. Five hundred floors, and forty eke, I think, has Bilskirnir with its windings. Of all the roofed houses that I know, is my son's the greatest.

25. Heidrún the goat is called, that stands o'er Odin's hall, and bites from Læråd's branches. He a bowl shall fill with the bright mead; that drink shall never fail.

26. Eikthyrnir the hart is called, that stands o'er Odin's hall, and bites from Læråd's branches; from his horns fall drops into Hvergelmir, whence all waters rise:—

27. Sid and Vid, Soekin and Eikin, Svöl and Gunnthró, Fiörm and Fimbulthul, Rin and Rennandi, Gípul and Göpul, Gömul and Geirvimul: they round the gods' dwelling wind. Thyn and Vin, Thöll and Höll, Gråd and Gunnthorin.

28. Vina one is called, a second Vegsvin, a third Thiodnuma; Nytt and Nön and Hrön, Slid and Hrid, Sylg and Ylg, Vid and Ván, Vönd and Strönd, Gioll and Leipt; these (two) fall near to men, but fall hence to Hel.

29. Körmt and Ormt, and the Kerlaugs twain: these Thor must wade each day, when he to council goes at Yggdrasil's ash; for the As-bridge is all on fire, the holy waters boil.

30. Glad and Gyllir, Gler and Skeidbrimir, Silfrintopp and Sinir, Gisl and Falhöfnir, Gulltopp and Lettfeti; on these steeds the Æsir each day ride, when they to council go, at Yggdrasil's ash.

31. Three roots stand on three ways under Yggdrasil's ash: Hel under one abides, under the second the Hrimthursar, under the third mankind.

32. Ratatösk is the squirrel named, which, has to run in Yggdrasil's ash; he from above the eagle's words must carry, and beneath to Nidhögg repeat.

33. Harts there are also four, which from its summits, arch-necked, gnaw. Dáin and Dvalin, Duneyr and Durathrôr.
34. More serpents lie under Yggdrasil's ash, than any one would think of witless mortals: Gôin and Môin,—they are Grafvitnir's sons—Grâbak and Grafvöllud, Ofnir and Svafnir, will, I ween, the branches of that tree ever lacerate.
35. Yggdrasil's ash hardship suffers greater than men know of; a hart bites it above, and in its side it rots, Nidhögg beneath tears it.
36. Hrist and Mist the horn shall bear me Skeggöld and Skögun, Hlökk and Herfotur, Hildi and Thrüdi, Göll and Geirölul, Randgrid and Râdgrid, and Reginleif, these bear beer to the Einheriar.
37. Arvakr and Alsvid, theirs 'tis up hence fasting the sun to draw: under their shoulder the gentle powers, the Æsir, have concealed an iron-coolness.
38. Svalin the shield is called, which stands before the sun, the refulgent deity; rocks and ocean must, I ween, be burnt, fell it from its place.
39. Sköll the wolf is named, that the fair-faced goddess to the ocean chases; another Hati hight, he is Hrôdvitnir's son; he the bright maid of heaven shall precede.
40. Of Ymir's flesh was earth created, of his blood the sea, of his bones the hills, of his hair trees and plants, of his skull the heaven;
41. And of his brows the gentle powers formed Midgard for the sons of men; but of his brain the heavy clouds are all created.
42. Ullr's and all the gods' favour shall have, whoever first shall look to the fire; for open will the dwelling be, to the Æsir's sons, when the kettles are lifted off.
43. Ivaldi's sons went in days of old Skidbladnir to form, of ships the best, for the bright Frey, Niörd's benign son.
44. Yggdrasil's ash is of all trees most excellent, and of all ships, Skidbladnir, of the Æsir, Odin, and of horses, Sleipnir, Bifröst of bridges, and of skallds, Bragi, Hábrök of hawks, and of dogs, Garm, [Brimir of swords.]
45. Now I my face have raised to the gods' triumphant sons, at that will welcome help awake; from all the Æsir, that shall penetrate, to Oegir's bench, to Oegir's comotation.
46. I am called Grim, I am called Gangleri, Herian and Hiålumberi, Thekk and Thridi, Thund and Ud, Helblindi and Har,
47. Sad and Svipall, and Sanngetal, Herteit and Hnikar Bileyg, Båleyg, Bölverk, Fiölnir, Grim and Grímnir, Glapsvid and Fiölsvid,
48. Sidhött, Sidskegg Sigfödr, Hnikud, Alfödr, Valfödr, Atrid and Farmatyr; by one name I never have been called, since among men I have gone.
49. Grímnir I am called at Geirröd's, and at Asmund's Jálk and Kialar, when a sledge I drew; Thrôr at the public meetings, Vidur in battles, Oski and Omi, Jafnhâr and Biflindi, Góndlir and Harbard with the gods.
50. Svidur and Svidrir I was at Sökkmimir's called, and beguiled that ancient Jötun, when of Midvitnir's renowned son I was the sole destroyer.
51. Drunken art thou, Geirröd, thou hast drunk too much, thou art greatly by mead beguiled. Much didst thou lose, when thou wast of my help bereft, of all the Einheriar's and Odin's favour.
52. Many things I told thee, but thou hast few remembered: thy friends mislead thee. My friend's sword lying I see, with blood all dripping.
53. The fallen by the sword Ygg shall now have; thy life is now run out: Wroth with thee are the Disir: Odin thou now shalt see: draw near to me if thou canst.
54. Odin I now am named, Ygg I was called before, before that, Thund, Vakr and Skilfing, Váfudr and Hrôptatyr, with the gods, Gaut and Jálk, Ofnir and Svafnir, all which I believe to be names of me alone.

King Geirröd was sitting with his sword lying across his knees, half drawn from the scabbard, but on finding that it was Odin, he rose for the purpose of removing him from the fires, when the sword slipt from his hand with the hilt downwards; and the king having stumbled, the sword pierced him through and killed him. Odin then vanished, and Agnar was king for a long time after.

THE LAY OF VEGTAM, OR BALDR'S DREAMS.

1. Together were the Æsir all in council, and the Asyniur all in conference, and they consulted, the mighty gods, why Baldr had oppressive dreams.
2. [To that god his slumber was most afflicting; his auspicious dreams seemed departed. They the Jötuns questioned, wise seers of the future, whether this might not forebode calamity?
3. The responses said that to death destined was Ullr's kinsman, of all the dearest: that caused grief to Frigg and Svafnir, and to the other powers—On a course they resolved:
4. That they would send to every being, assurance to solicit, Baldr not to harm. All species swore oaths to spare him; Frigg received all their vows and compacts.
5. Valfather fears something defective; he thinks the Hamingiur may have departed; the Æsir he convenes, their counsel craves: at the deliberation much is devised.]
6. Uprose Odin lord of men and on Sleipnir he the saddle laid; rode thence down to Niflhel. A dog he met, from Hel coming.
7. It was blood-stained on its breast, on its slaughter-craving throat, and nether jaw. It bayed and widely gaped at the sire of magic song:—long it howled.
8. Forth rode Odin—the ground rattled—till to Hel's lofty house he came. Then rode Ygg to the eastern gate, where he knew there was a Vala's grave.
9. To the prophetess, he began a magic song to chant, towards the north looked, potent runes applied, a spell pronounced, an answer demanded, until compelled she rose, and with deathlike voice she said:

Vala:

10. "What man is this, to me unknown, who has for me increased an irksome course? I have with snow been decked, by rain beaten, and with dew moistened: long have I been dead."

Vegtam:

11. "Vegtam is my name, I am Valtam's son. Tell thou me of Hel: from, earth I call on thee. For whom are those benches strewed o'er with rings, those costly couches o'erlaid with gold?"

Vala:

12. "Here stands mead, for Baldr brewed, over the bright potion a shield is laid; but the Æsir race are in despair. By compulsion I have spoken. I will now be silent."

Vegtam:

13. "Be not silent, Vala! I will question thee, until I know all. I will yet know who will Baldr's slayer be, and Odin's son of life bereave."

Vala:

14. "Hödr will hither his glorious brother send, he of Baldr will the slayer be, and Odin's son of life bereave. By compulsion I have spoken; I will now be silent."

Vegtam:

15. "Be not silent, Vala! I will question thee, until I know all. I will yet know who on Hödr vengeance will inflict, or Baldr's slayer raise on the pile."

Vala:

16. "Rind a son shall bear, in the western halls: he shall slay Odin's son, when one night old. He a hand will not wash, nor his head comb, ere he to the pile has borne Baldr's adversary. By compulsion I have spoken; I will now be silent."

Vegtam:

17. "Be not silent, Vala! I will question thee, until I know all. I will yet know who the maidens are, that weep at will, and heavenward cast their neck-veils? Tell me but that: till then thou sleepest not."

Vala:

18. "Not Vegtam art thou, as I before believed; rather art thou Odin, lord of men!"

Odin:

19. "Thou art no Vala, nor wise woman, rather art thou the mother of three Thursar."

Vala:

20. "Home ride thou, Odin! and exult. Thus shall never more man again visit me, until Loki free from his bonds escapes, and Ragnarök all-destroying comes."

THE HIGH ONE'S LAY.

1. All door-ways, before going forward, should be looked to; for difficult it is to know where foes may sit within a dwelling.
2. Givers, hail! A guest is come in: where shall he sit? In much haste is he, who on the ways has to try his luck.
3. Fire is needful to him who is come in, and whose knees are frozen; food and raiment a man requires, whe'er the fell has travelled.
4. Water to him is needful who for refection comes, a towel and hospitable invitation, a good reception; if he can get it, discourse and answer.
5. Wit is needful to him who travels far: at home all is easy. A laughing-stock is he who nothing knows, and with the instructed sits.
6. Of his understanding no one should be proud, but rather in conduct cautious. When the prudent and taciturn come to a dwelling, harm seldom befalls the cautious; for a firmer friend no man ever gets than great sagacity.
7. A wary guest, who to refection comes, keeps a cautious silence, with his ears listens, and with his eyes observes: so explores every prudent man.
8. He is happy, who for himself obtains fame and kind words: less sure is that which a man must have in another's breast.
9. He is happy, who in himself possesses fame and wit while living; for bad counsels have oft been received from another's breast.
10. A better burthen no man bears on the way than much good sense; that is thought better than riches in a strange place; such is the recourse of the indigent.
11. A worse provision on the way he cannot carry than too much beer-bibbing; so good is not, as it is said, beer for the sons of men.
12. A worse provision no man can take from table than too much beer-bibbing: for the more he drinks the less control he has of his own mind.
13. Oblivion's heron 'tis called that over potations hovers; he steals the minds of men. With this bird's pinions I was fettered in Gunnlod's dwelling.
14. Drunk I was, I was over-drunk, at that cunning Fialar's. It's the best drunkenness, when every one after it regains his reason.
15. Taciturn and prudent, and in war daring, should a king's children be; joyous and liberal every one should be until his hour of death.
16. A cowardly man thinks he will ever live, if warfare he avoids; but old age will give him no peace, though spears may spare him.
17. A fool gapes when to a house he comes, to himself mutters or is silent; but all at once, if he gets drink, then is the man's mind displayed.
18. He alone knows who wanders wide, and has much experienced, by what disposition each man is ruled, who common sense possesses.
19. Let a man hold the cup, yet of the mead drink moderately, speak sensibly or be silent. As of a fault no man will admonish thee, if thou goest betimes to sleep.
20. A greedy man, if he be not moderate, eats to his mortal sorrow. Oftentimes his belly draws laughter on a silly man, who among the prudent comes.
21. Cattle know when to go home, and then from grazing cease; but a foolish man never knows his stomach's measure.
22. A miserable man, and ill-conditioned, sneers at every thing: one thing he knows not, which he ought to know, that he is not free from faults.
23. A foolish man is all night awake, pondering over everything; he then grows tired; and when morning comes, all is lament as before.
24. A foolish man thinks all who on him smile to be his friends; he feels it not, although they speak ill of him, when he sits among the clever.
25. A foolish man thinks all who speak him fair to be his friends; but he will find, if into court he comes, that he has few advocates.
26. A foolish man thinks he knows everything if placed in unexpected difficulty; but he knows not what to answer, if to the test he is put.

27. A foolish man, who among people comes, had best be silent; for no one knows that he knows nothing, unless he talks too much. He who previously knew nothing will still know nothing, talk he ever so much.
28. He thinks himself wise, who can ask questions and converse also; conceal his ignorance no one can, because it circulates among men.
29. He utters too many futile words who is never silent; a garrulous tongue, if it be not checked, sings often to its own harm.
30. For a gazing-stock no man shall have another, although he come a stranger to his house. Many a one thinks himself wise, if he is not questioned, and can sit in a dry habit.
31. Clever thinks himself the guest who jeers a guest, if he takes to flight. Knows it not certainly he who prates at meat, whether he babbles among foes.
32. Many men are mutually well-disposed, yet at table will torment each other. That strife will ever be; guest will guest irritate.
33. Early meals a man should often take, unless to a friend's house he goes; else he will sit and mope, will seem half-famished, and can of few things inquire.
34. Long is and indirect the way to a bad friend's, though by the road he dwell; but to a good friend's the paths lie direct, though he be far away.
35. A guest should depart, not always stay in one place. The welcome becomes unwelcome, if he too long continues in another's house.
36. One's own house is best, small though it be; at home is every one his own master. Though he but two goats possess, and a straw-thatched cot, even that is better than begging.
37. One's own house is best, small though it be, at home is every one his own master. Bleeding at heart is he, who has to ask for food at every meal-tide.
38. Leaving in the field his arms, let no man go a foot's length forward; for it is hard to know when on the way a man may need his weapon.
39. I have never found a man so bountiful, or so hospitable that he refused a present; or of his property so liberal that he scorned a recompense.
40. Of the property which he has gained no man should suffer need; for the hated oft is spared what for the dear was destined. Much goes worse than is expected.
41. With arms and vestments friends should each other gladden, those which are in themselves most slightly. Givers and requiters are longest friends, if all [else] goes well.
42. To his friend a man should be a friend, and gifts with gifts requite. Laughter with laughter men should receive, but leasing with lying.
43. To his friend a man should be a friend; to him and to his friend; but of his foe no man shall the friend's friend be.
44. Know, if thou hast a friend whom thou fully trustest, and from whom thou wouldst't good derive, thou shouldst blend thy mind with his, and gifts exchange, and often go to see him.
45. If thou hast another, whom thou little trustest, yet wouldst good from him derive, thou shouldst speak him fair, but think craftily, and leasing pay with lying.
46. But of him yet further, whom thou little trustest, and thou suspectest his affection; before him thou shouldst laugh, and contrary to thy thoughts speak: requital should the gift resemble.
47. I was once young, I was journeying alone, and lost my way; rich I thought myself, when I met another. Man is the joy of man.
48. Liberal and brave men live best, they seldom cherish sorrow; but a base-minded man dreads everything; the niggardly is uneasy even at gifts.
49. My garments in a field I gave away to two wooden men: heroes they seemed to be, when they got cloaks: exposed to insult is a naked man.
50. A tree withers that on a hill-top stands; protects it neither bark nor leaves: such is the man whom no one favours: why should he live long?
51. Hotter than fire love for five days burns between false friends; but is quenched when the sixth day comes, and friendship is all impaired.

52. Something great is not [always] to be given, praise is often for a trifle bought. With half a loaf and a tilted vessel I got myself a comrade.
53. Little are the sand-grains, little the wits, little the minds of [some] men; for all men are not wise alike: men are everywhere by halves.
54. Moderately wise should each one be, but never over-wise: of those men the lives are fairest, who know much well.
55. Moderately wise should each one be, but never over-wise; for a wise man's heart is seldom glad, if he is all-wise who owns it.
56. Moderately wise should each one be, but never over-wise. His destiny let know no man beforehand; his mind will be freest from' care.
57. Brand burns from brand until it is burnt out; fire is from fire quickened. Man to' man becomes known by speech, but a fool by his bashful silence.
58. He should early rise, who another's property or wife desires to have. Seldom a sluggish wolf gets prey, or a sleeping man victory.
59. Early should rise he who has few workers, and go his work to see to; greatly is he retarded who sleeps the morn away. Wealth half depends on energy.
60. Of dry planks and roof-shingles a man knows the measure; of the fire-wood that may suffice, both measure and time.
61. Washed and refected let a man ride to the Thing, although his garments be not too good; of his shoes and breeches let no one be ashamed, nor of his horse, although he have not a good one.
62. Inquire and impart should every man of sense, who will be accounted sage. Let one only know, a second may not; if three, all the world knows.
63. Gasps and gapes, when to the sea he comes, the eagle over old ocean; so is a man, who among many comes, and has few advocates.
64. His power should every sagacious man use with discretion; for he will find, when among the bold he comes, that no one alone is doughtiest.
65. Circumspect and reserved every man should be, and wary in trusting friends. Of the words that a man says to another he often pays the penalty.
66. Much too early I came to many places, but too late to others: the beer was drunk, or not ready: the disliked seldom hits the moment.
67. Here and there I should have been invited, if I a meal had needed; or two hams had hung, at that true friend's, where of one I had eaten.
68. Fire is best among the sons of men, and the sight of the sun, if his health a man can have, with a life free from vice.
69. No man lacks everything, although his health be bad: one in his sons is happy, one in his kin, one in abundant wealth, one in his good works.
70. It is better to live, even to live miserably; a living man can always get a cow. I saw fire consume the rich man's property, and death stood without his door.
71. The halt can ride on horseback, the one-handed drive cattle; the deaf fight and be useful: to be blind is better than to be burnt no one gets good from a corpse.
72. A son is better, even if born late, after his father's departure. Gravestones seldom stand by the way-side unless raised by a kinsman to a kinsman.
73. Two are adversaries: the tongue is the bane of the head: under every cloak I expect a hand. * * *
74. At night is joyful he who is sure of travelling entertainment. [A ship's yards are short.] Variable is an autumn night. Many are the weather's changes in five days, but more in a month.
75. He [only] knows not who knows nothing, that many a one apes another. One man is rich, another poor: let him not be thought blameworthy.
76. Cattle die, kindred die, we ourselves also die; but the fair fame never dies of him who has earned it.
77. Cattle die, kindred die, we ourselves also die; but I know one thing that never dies,—judgment on each one dead.
78. Full storehouses I saw at Dives' sons': now bear they the beggar's staff. Such are riches; as is the twinkling of an eye: of friends they are most fickle.
79. A foolish man, if he acquires wealth or woman's love, pride grows within him, but wisdom never: he goes on more and more arrogant.
80. Then 'tis made manifest, if of runes thou questionest him, those to the high ones known, which the great powers invented, and the great talker painted, that he had best hold silence.
81. At eve the day is to be praised, a woman after she is burnt, a sword after it is proved, a maid after she is married, ice after it has passed away, beer after it is drunk.
82. In the wind one should hew wood, in a breeze row out to sea, in the dark talk with a lass: many are the eyes of day. In a ship voyages are to be made, but a shield is for protection, a sword for striking, but a damsel for a kiss.
83. By the fire one should drink beer, on the ice slide; buy a horse that is lean, a sword that is rusty; feed a horse at home, but a dog at the farm.
84. In a maiden's words no one should place faith, nor in what a woman says; for on a turning wheel have their hearts been formed, and guile in their breasts been laid;
85. In a creaking bow, a burning flame, a yawning wolf, a chattering crow, a grunting swine, a rootless tree, a waxing wave, a boiling kettle,
86. A flying dart, a falling billow, a one night's ice, a coiled serpent, a woman's bed-talk, or a broken sword, a bear's play, or a royal child,
87. A sick calf, a self-willed thrall, a flattering prophetess, a corpse newly slain, [a serene sky, a laughing lord, a barking dog, and a harlot's grief];
88. An early sown field let no one trust, nor prematurely in a son: weather rules the field, and wit the son, each of which is doubtful;
89. A brother's murderer, though on the high road met, a half-burnt house, an over-swift horse, (a horse is useless, if a leg be broken), no man is so confiding as to trust any of these.
90. Such is the love of women, who falsehood meditate, as if one drove not rough-shod, on slippery ice, a spirited two-years old and unbroken horse; or as in a raging storm a helmless ship is beaten; or as if the halt were set to catch a reindeer in the thawing fell.
91. Openly I now speak, because I both sexes know: unstable are men's minds towards women; 'tis then we speak most fair when we most falsely think: that deceives even the cautious.
92. Fair shall speak, and money offer, who would obtain a woman's love. Praise the form of a fair damsel; he gets who courts her.
93. At love should no one ever wonder in another: a beauteous countenance oft captivates the wise, which captivates not the foolish.
94. Let no one wonder at another's folly, it is the lot of many. All-powerful desire makes of the sons of men fools even of the wise.
95. The mind only knows what lies near the heart, that alone is conscious of our affections. No disease is worse to a sensible man than not to be content with himself.
96. That I experienced, when in the reeds I sat, awaiting my delight. Body and soul to me was that discreet maiden: nevertheless I possess her not.
97. Billing's lass on her couch I found, sun-bright, sleeping. A prince's joy to me seemed naught, if not with that form to live.
98. "Yet nearer eve must thou, Odin, come, if thou wilt talk the maiden over; all will be disastrous, unless we alone are privy to such misdeed."
99. I returned, thinking to love, at her wise desire. I thought I should obtain her whole heart and love.
100. When next I came the bold warriors were all awake, with lights burning, and bearing torches: thus was the way to pleasure closed.
101. But at the approach of morn, when again I came, the household all was sleeping; the good damsel's dog alone I found tied to the bed.
102. Many a fair maiden, when rightly known, towards men is fickle: that I experienced, when that discreet maiden I strove to seduce: contumely of every kind that wily girl heaped upon me; nor of that damsel gained I aught.

103. At home let a man be cheerful, and towards a guest liberal; of wise conduct he should be, of good memory and ready speech; if much knowledge he desires, he must often talk on good.

104. Fimbulfambi he is called who' little has to say: such is the nature of the simple.

105. The old Jotun I sought; now I am come back: little got I there by silence; in many words I spoke to my advantage in Suttung's halls.

106. Gunnlod gave me, on her golden seat, a draught of the precious mead; a bad recompense I afterwards made her, for her whole soul, her fervent love.

107. Rati's mouth I caused to make a space, and to gnaw the rock; over and under me were the Jotun's ways: thus I my head did peril.

108. Of a well-assumed form I made good use: few things fail the wise; for Odhrærir is now come up to men's earthly dwellings.

109. 'Tis to me doubtful that I could have come from the Jotun's courts, had not Gunnlod aided me, that good damsel, over whom I laid my arm.

110. On the day following came the Hrimthursar, to learn something of the High One, in the High One's hall: after Bolverk they inquired, whether he with the gods were come, or Suttung had destroyed him?

111. Odin, I believe, a ring-oath gave. Who in his faith will trust? Suttung defrauded, of his drink bereft, and Gunnlod made to weep!

112. Time 'tis to discourse from the preacher's chair. By the well of Urd I silent sat, I saw and meditated, I listened to men's words.

113. Of runes I heard discourse, and of things divine, nor of grav-ing them were they silent, nor of sage counsels, at the High One's hall. In the High One's hall. I thus heard say:

114. I counsel thee, Loddafnir, to take advice: thou wilt profit if thou takest it. Rise not at night, unless to explore, or art compelled to go out.

115. I counsel thee, Loddafnir, to take advice, thou wilt profit if thou takest it. In an enchantress's embrace thou mayest not sleep, so that in her arms she clasp thee.

116. She will be the cause that thou carest not for Thing or prince's words; food thou wilt shun and human joys; sorrowful wilt thou go to sleep.

117. I counsel thee, etc. Another's wife entice thou never to secret converse.

118. I counsel thee, etc. By fell or firth if thou have to travel, provide thee well with food.

119. I counsel thee, etc. A bad man let thou never know thy mis-fortunes; for from a bad man thou never wilt obtain a return for thy good will.

120. I saw mortally wound a man a wicked woman's words; a false tongue caused his death, and most unrighteously.

121. I counsel thee, etc. If thou knowest thou hast a friend, whom thou well canst trust, go oft to visit him; for with brushwood over-grown, and with high grass, is the way that no one treads.

122. I counsel thee, etc. A good man attract to thee in pleasant converse; and salutary speech learn while thou livest.

123. I counsel thee, etc. With thy friend be thou never first to quarrel. Care gnaws the heart, if thou to no one canst thy whole mind disclose.

124. I counsel thee, etc. Words thou never shouldst exchange with a witless fool;

125. For from an ill-conditioned man thou wilt never get a return for good; but a good man will bring thee favour by his praise.

126. There is a mingling of affection, where one can tell another all his mind. Everything is better than being with the deceitful. He is not another's friend who ever says as he says.

127. I counsel thee, etc. Even in three words quarrel not with a worse man: often the better yields, when the worse strikes.

128. I counsel thee, etc. Be not a shoemaker, nor a shaftmaker, unless for thyself it be; for a shoe if ill made, or a shaft if crooked, will call down evil on thee.

129. I counsel thee, etc. Wherever of injury thou knowest, regard that injury as thy own; and give to thy foes no peace.

130. I counsel thee, etc. Rejoiced at evil be thou never; but let good give thee pleasure.

131. I counsel thee, etc. In a battle look not up, (like swine the sons of men then become) that men may not fascinate thee.

132. If thou wilt induce a good woman to pleasant converse, thou must promise fair, and hold to it: no one turns from good if it can be got.

133. I enjoin thee to be wary, but not over wary; at drinking be thou most wary, and with another's wife; and thirdly, that thieves delude thee not.

134. With insult or derision treat thou never a guest or wayfarer. They often little know, who sit within, of what race they are who come.

135. Vices and virtues the sons of mortals bear in their breasts mingled; no one is so good that no failing attends him, nor so bad as to be good for nothing.

136. At a hoary speaker laugh thou never; often is good that which the aged utter, oft from a shriveled hide discreet words issue; from those whose skin is pendent and decked with scars, and who go tottering among the vile.

137. I counsel thee, etc. Rail not at a guest, nor from thy gate thrust him; treat well the indigent; they will speak well of thee.

138. Strong is the bar that must be raised to admit all. Do thou give a penny, or they will call down on thee every ill in thy limbs.

139. I counsel thee, etc. Wherever thou beer drinkest, invoke to thee the power of earth; for earth is good against drink, fire for distempers, the oak for constipation, a corn-ear for sorcery, a hall for domestic strife. In bitter hates invoke the moon; the biter for bite-injuries is good; but runes against calamity; fluid let earth absorb.

ODIN'S RUNE-SONG.

140. I know that I hung, on a wind-rocked tree, nine whole nights, with a spear wounded, and to Odin offered, myself to myself; on that tree, of which no one knows from what root it springs.

141. Bread no one gave me, nor a horn of drink, downward I peered, to runes applied myself, wailing learnt them, then fell down thence.

142. Potent songs nine from the famed son I learned of Bolthorn, Bestla's sire, and a draught obtained of the precious mead, drawn from Odhrærir.

143. Then I began to bear fruit, and to know many things, to grow and well thrive: word by word I sought out words, fact by fact I sought out facts.

144. Runes thou wilt find, and explained characters, very large characters, very potent characters, which the great speaker depicted, and the high powers formed, and the powers' prince graved:

145. Odin among the Æsir, but among the Alfur, Dain, and Dvalin for the dwarfs, Asvid for the Jotuns: some I myself graved.

146. Knowest thou how to grave them? knowest thou how to expound them? knowest thou how to depict them? knowest thou how to prove them? knowest thou how to pray? knowest thou how to offer? knowest thou how to send? knowest thou how to consume?

147. 'Tis better not to pray than too much offer; a gift ever looks to a return. 'Tis better not to send than too much consume. So Thund graved before the origin of men, where he ascended, to whence he afterwards came.

148. Those songs I know which the king's wife knows not nor son of man. Help the first is called, for that will help thee against strifes and cares.

149. For the second I know, what the sons of men require, who will as leeches live. * * * *

150. For the third I know, if I have great need to restrain my foes, the weapons' edge I deaden: of my adversaries nor arms nor wiles harm aught.

151. For the fourth I know, if men place bonds on my limbs, I so sing that I can walk; the fetter starts from my feet, and the manacle from my hands.

152. For the fifth I know, if I see a shot from a hostile hand, a shaft flying amid the host, so swift it cannot fly that I cannot arrest it, if only I get sight of it.

153. For the sixth I know, if one wounds me with a green tree's roots; also if a man declares hatred to me, harm shall consume them sooner than me.

154. For the seventh I know, if a lofty house I see blaze o'er its inmates, so furiously it shall not burn that I cannot save it. That song I can sing.

155. For the eighth I know, what to all is useful to learn: where hatred grows among the sons of men—that I can quickly assuage.

156. For the ninth I know, if I stand in need my bark on the water to save, I can the wind on the waves allay, and the sea lull.

157. For the tenth I know, if I see troll-wives sporting in air, I can so operate that they will forsake their own forms, and their own minds.

158. For the eleventh I know, if I have to lead my ancient friends to battle, under their shields I sing, and with power they go safe to the fight, safe from the fight; safe on every side they go.

159. For the twelfth I know, if on a tree I see a corpse swinging from a halter, I can so grave and in runes depict, that the man shall walk, and with me converse.

160. For the thirteenth I know, if on a young man I sprinkle water, he shall not fall, though he into battle come: that man shall not sink before swords.

161. For the fourteenth I know, if in the society of men I have to enumerate the gods, Æsir and Alfár, I know the distinctions of all. This few unskilled can do.

162. For the fifteenth I know what the dwarf Thiodreyrir sang before Dellíng's doors. Strength he sang to the Æsir, and to the Alfár prosperity, wisdom to Hroptatyr.

163. For the sixteenth I know, if a modest maiden's favour and affection I desire to possess, the soul I change of the white-armed damsel, and wholly turn her mind.

164. For the seventeenth I know, that that young maiden will reluctantly avoid me. These songs, Loddafafnir! thou wilt long have lacked; yet it may be good if thou understandest them, profitable if thou learnest them.

165. For the eighteenth I know that which I never teach to maid or wife of man, (all is better what one only knows. This is the closing of the songs) save her alone who clasps me in her arms, or is my sister.

166. Now are sung the High-one's songs, in the High-one's hall, to the sons of men all-useful, but useless to the Jotuns' sons. Hail to him who has sung them! Hail to him who knows them! May he profit who has learnt them! Hail to those who have listened to them!

THE LAY OF HYMIR.

1. Once the celestial gods had been taking fish, and were in comotation, ere they the truth discovered. Rods they shook, and blood inspected, when they found at Oegir's a lack of kettles.

2. Sat the rock-dweller glad as a child, much like the son of Miskorblindi. In his eyes looked Ygg's son steadfastly. "Thou to the Æsir shalt oft a comotation give."

3. Caused trouble to the Jotun th' unwelcome-worded As: he forthwith meditated vengeance on the gods. Sif's husband he besought a kettle him to bring, "in which I beer for all of you may brew."

4. The illustrious gods found that impossible, nor could the exalted powers it accomplish, till from true-heartedness, Ty to Hlorridi much friendly counsel gave.

5. "There dwells eastward of Elivagar the all-wise Hymir, at heaven's end. My sire, fierce of mood, a kettle owns, a capacious cauldron, a rast in depth."

Thor:

6. "Knowest thou whether we can get the liquor-boiler?"

Ty:

"Yes, friend! if we stratagem' employ." Rapidly they drove forward that day from Asgard, till to the giant's home they came.

7. Thor stalled his goats, splendid of horn, then turned him to the hall that Hymir owned. The son his granddam found to him most loathful; heads she had nine hundred.

8. But another came all-golden forth, fair-browed, bearing the beer-cup to her son:

9. "Ye Jotuns' kindred! I will you both, ye daring pair, under the kettles place. My husband is oftentimes niggard towards guests, to ill-humour prone."

10. But the monster, the fierce-souled Hymir, late returned home from the chase. He the hall entered, the icebergs resounded, as the churl approached; the thicket on his cheeks was frozen.

11. "Hail to thee, Hymir! be of good cheer: now thy son is come to thy hall, whom we expected from his long journey; him accompanies our famed adversary, the friend of man, who Veor hight.

12. See where they sit under the hall's gable, as if to shun thee: the pillar stands before them." In shivers flew the pillar at the Jotun's glance; the beam was first broken in two.

13. Eight kettles fell, but only one of them, a hard-hammered cauldron, whole from the column. The two came forth, but the old Jotun with eyes surveyed his adversary.

14. Augured to him his mind no good, when he saw the giantess's sorrow on the floor coming. Then were three oxen taken, and the Jotun bade them forthwith be boiled.

15. Each one they made by the head shorter, and to the fire afterwards bore them. Sif's consort ate, ere to sleep he went, completely, he alone, two of Hymir's beeves.

16. Seemed to the hoary friend of Hrungrnir Hlorridi's refecton full well large: "We three to-morrow night shall be compelled on what we catch to live."

17. Veor said he would on the sea row, if the bold Jotun him would with baits supply: "To the herd betake thee, (if thou in thy courage trustest, crusher of the rock-dwellers!) for baits to seek.

18. I expect that thou wilt bait from an ox easily obtain." The guest in haste to the forest went, where stood an all-black ox before him.

19. The Thursar's bane wrung from an ox the high fastness of his two horns. "To me thy work seems worse by far, ruler of keels! than if thou hadst sat quiet."

20. The lord of goats the apes' kinsman besought the horse of plank farther out to move; but the Jotun declared his slight desire farther to row.

21. The mighty Hymir drew, he alone, two whales up with his hook; but at the stern abait Veor cunningly made him a line.

22. Fixed on the hook the shield of men, the serpent's slayer, the ox's head. Gaped at the bait the foe of gods, the encircler beneath of every land.

23. Drew up boldly the mighty Thor the worm with venom glistering, up to the side; with his hammer struck, on his foul head's summit, like a rock towering, the wolf's own brother.

24. The icebergs resounded, the caverns howled, the old earth shrank together: at length the fish back into ocean sank.

25. The Jotun was little glad, as they rowed back, so that the powerful Hymir nothing spake, but the oar moved in another course.

26. "Wilt thou do half the work with me, either the whales home to the dwelling bear, or the boat fast bind?"

27. Hlorridi went, grasped the prow, quickly, with its hold-water, lifted the water-steed, together with its oars and scoop; bore to the dwelling the Jotun's ocean-swine, the curved vessel, through the wooded hills.

28. But the Jotun yet ever frowned, to strife accustomed, with Thor disputed, said that no one was strong, however vigorously he might row, unless he his cup could break.

29. But Hlorridi, when to his hands it came, forthwith brake an upright stone in twain; sitting dashed the cup through the pillars: yet they brought it whole to Hymir back.

30. Until the beauteous woman gave important, friendly counsel, which she only knew: "Strike at the head of Hymir, the Jotun with food oppressed, that is harder than any cup."

31. Rose then on his knee the stern lord of goats, clad in all his godlike power. Unhurt remained the old man's helm-block, but the round wine-bearer was in shivers broken.

32. "Much good, I know, has departed from me, now that my cup I see hurled from my knees." Thus the old man spake: "I can never say again, beer thou art too hot.

33. "Now 'tis to be tried if ye can carry the beer-vessel out of our dwelling." Ty twice assayed to move the vessel, yet at each time stood the kettle fast.

34. Then Modi's father by the brim grasped it, and trod through the dwelling's floor. Sif's consort lifted the kettle on his head, while about his heels its rings jingled.

35. They had far journeyed before Odin's son cast one look backward: he from the caverns saw, with Hymir from the east, a troop of many-headed monsters coming.

36. From his shoulders he lifted the kettle down; Miollnir hurled forth towards the savage crew, and slew all the mountain-giants, who with Hymir had him pursued.

37. Long they had not journeyed when of Hlorridi's goats one lay down half-dead before the car. It from the pole had sprung across the trace; but the false Loki was of this the cause.

38. Now ye have heard,—for what fabulist can more fully tell—what indemnity he from the giant got: he paid for it with his children both.

39. In his strength exulting he to the gods' council came, and had the kettle, which Hymir had possessed, out of which every god shall beer with Oegir drink at every harvest-tide.

THE LAY OF THRYM, OR THE HAMMER RECOVERED.

1. Wroth was Vingthor, when he awoke, and his hammer missed; his beard he shook, his forehead struck, the son of earth felt all around him;

2. And first of all these words he uttered: "Hear now, Loki! what I now say, which no one knows anywhere on earth, nor in heaven above; the As's hammer is stolen!"

3. They went to the fair Freyia's dwelling, and he these words first of all said: "Wilt thou me, Freyia, thy feather-garment lend, that perchance my hammer I may find?"

Freyia:

4. "That I would give thee, although of gold it were, and trust it to thee, though it were of silver."

5. Flew then Loki—the plumage rattled—until he came beyond the Æsir's dwellings, and came within the Jotun's land.

6. On a mound sat Thrym, the Thursar's lord, for his greyhounds plaiting gold bands and his horses' manes smoothing.

7. "How goes it with the Æsir? How goes it with the Alfár? Why art thou come alone to Jotunheim?"

Loki:

8. "Ill it goes with the Æsir, Ill it goes with the Alfár. Hast thou Hlorridi's hammer hidden?"

Thrym:

9. "I have Hlorridi's hammer hidden eight rasts beneath the earth; it shall no man get again, unless he bring me Freyia to wife."

10. Flew then Loki—the plumage rattled—until he came beyond the Jotun's dwellings, and came within the Æsir's courts; there he met Thor, in the middle court, who these words first of all uttered.

11. "Hast thou had success as well as labour? Tell me from the air the long tidings. Oft of him who sits are the tales defective, and he who lies down utters falsehood."

Loki:

12. "I have had labour and success: Thrym has thy hammer, the Thursar's lord. It shall no man get again, unless he bring him Freyia to wife."

13. They went the fair Freyia to find; and he those words first of all said: "Bind thee, Freyia, in bridal raiment, we two must drive to Jotunheim."

14. Wroth then was Freyia, and with anger chafed, all the Æsir's hall beneath her trembled: in shivers flew the famed Brisinga necklace. "Know me to be of women lewdest, if with thee I drive to Jotunheim."

15. Straightway went the Æsir all to council, and the Asyniur all to hold converse; and deliberated the mighty gods, how they Hlorridi's hammer might get back.

16. Then said Heimdall, of Æsir brightest—he well foresaw, like other Vanir—"Let us clothe Thor with bridal raiment, let him have the famed Brisinga necklace.

17. "Let by his side keys jingle, and woman's weeds fall round his knees, but on his breast place precious stones, and a neat coif set on his head."

18. Then said Thor, the mighty As: "Me the Æsir will call womanish, if I let myself be clad in bridal raiment."

19. Then spake Loki, Laufey's son: "Do thou, Thor! refrain from suchlike words: forthwith the Jotuns will Asgard inhabit, unless thy hammer thou gettest back."

20. Then they clad Thor in bridal raiment, and with the noble Brisinga necklace, let by his side keys jingle, and woman's weeds fall round his knees; and on his breast placed precious stones, and a neat coif set on his head.

21. Then said Loki, Laufey's son: "I will with thee as a servant go: we two will drive to Jotunheim."

22. Straightway were the goats homeward driven, hurried to the traces; they had fast to run. The rocks were shivered, the earth was in a blaze; Odin's son drove to Jotunheim.

23. Then said Thrym, the Thursar's lord: "Rise up, Jotuns! and the benches deck, now they bring me Freyia to wife, Niord's daughter, from Noatun.

24. "Hither to our court let bring gold-horned cows, all-black oxen, for the Jotuns' joy. Treasures I have many, necklaces many, Freyia alone seemed to me wanting."

25. In the evening they early came, and for the Jotuns beer was brought forth. Thor alone an ox devoured, salmons eight, and all the sweetmeats women should have. Sif's consort drank three sals of mead.

26. Then said Thrym, the Thursar's prince: "Where hast thou seen brides eat more voraciously? I never saw brides feed more amply, nor a maiden drink more mead."

27. Sat the all-crafty serving-maid close by, who words fitting found against the Jotun's speech: "Freyia has nothing eaten for eight nights, so eager was she for Jotunheim."

28. Under her veil he stooped desirous to salute her, but sprang back along the hall. "Why are so piercing Freyia's looks? Me-thinks that fire burns from her eyes."

29. Sat the all-crafty serving-maid close by, who words fitting found against the Jotun's speech: "Freyia for eight nights has not slept, so eager was she for Jotunheim."

30. In came the Jotun's luckless sister, for a bride-gift she dared to ask: "Give me from thy hands the ruddy rings, if thou wouldst gain my love, my love and favour all."

31. Then said Thrym, the Thursar's lord: "Bring the hammer in, the bride to consecrate; lay Miollnir on the maiden's knee; unite us each with other by the hand of Vor."

32. Laughed Hlorridi's soul in his breast, when the fierce-hearted his hammer recognized. He first slew Thrym, the Thursar's lord, and the Jotun's race all crushed;

33. He slew the Jotun's aged sister, her who a bride-gift had demanded; she a blow got instead of skillings, a hammer's stroke for many rings. So got Odin's son his hammer back.

THE LAY OF THE DWARF ALVIS.

Alvis:

1. The benches they are decking, now shall the bride with me bend her way home. That beyond my strength I have hurried will to every one appear: at home naught shall disturb my quiet.

Vingthor:

2. What man is this? Why about the nose art thou so pale? Hast thou last night with corpses lain? To me thou seemst to bear resemblance to the Thursar. Thou art not born to carry off a bride.

Alvis:

3. Alvis I am named, beneath the earth I dwell, under the rock I own a place. The lord of chariots I am come to visit. A promise once confirmed let no one break.

Vingthor:

4. I will break it; for o'er the maid I have, as father, greatest power. I was from home when the promise was given thee. Among the gods I the sole giver am.

Alvis:

5. What man is this, who lays claim to power over that fair, bright maiden? For far-reaching shafts few will know thee. Who has decked thee with bracelets?

Vingthor:

6. Vingthor I am named, wide I have wandered; I am Sidgrani's

son: with my dissent thou shalt not that young maiden have, nor that union obtain.

Alvis:

7. Thy consent I fain would have, and that union obtain. Rather would I possess than be without that snow-white maiden.

Vingthor:

8. The maiden's love shall not, wise guest! be unto thee denied, if thou of every world canst tell all I desire to know.

Alvis:

9. Vingthor! thou canst try, as thou art desirous the knowledge of the dwarf to prove. All the nine worlds I have travelled over, and every being known.

Vingthor:

10. Tell me, Alvis!—for all men's concerns I presume thee, dwarf, to know—how the earth is called, which lies before the sons of men, in every world.

Alvis:

11. Jord among men 'tis called, but with the Æsir fold; the Vanir call it vega, the Jotuns igroen, the Alfar groandi, the powers supreme aur.

Vingthor:

12. Tell me, Alvis, etc. how the heaven is called, which is perceptible in every world.

Alvis:

13. Himinn 'tis called by men; but hlyrnir with the gods; vindofni the Vanir call it, uppheimr the Jotuns, the Alfar fagraræfr, the dwarfs driupansal.

Vingthor:

14. Tell me, Alvis! etc., how the moon is called, which men see in every world.

Alvis:

15. Mani 'tis called by men, but mylinn with the gods, hverfanda hvel in Hel they call it, skyndi the Jotuns, but the dwarfs skin; the Alfar name it artali.

Vingthor:

16. Tell me, Alvis! etc., how the sun is called, which men's sons see in every world.

Alvis:

17. Sol among men 'tis called, but with the gods sunna, the dwarfs call it Dvalinn's leika, the Jotuns eyglo, the Alfar fagrahvel, the Æsir's sons alskir.

Vingthor:

18. Tell me, Alvis, etc., how the clouds are called, which with showers are mingled in every world.

Alvis:

19. Sky they are called by men, but skurvan by the gods; the Vanir call them vindflot, the Jotuns urvan, the Alfar vedrmegin; in Hel they are called hialm hulids.

Vingthor:

20. Tell me, Alvis! etc., how the wind is called, which widely passes over every world.

Alvis:

21. Windr 'tis called by men, but vavudr by the gods, the wide-ruling powers call it gneggiud, the Jotuns oepir, the Alfar dynfari, in Hel they call it hvidudr.

Vingthor:

22. Tell me, Alvis! etc., how the calm is called, which has to rest in every world.

Alvis:

23. Logn 'tis called by men, but lægi by the gods, the Vanir call it vindslot, the Jotuns ofhly, the Alfar dagsevi, the Dwarfs call it dags vera.

Vingthor:

24. Tell me, Alvis! etc., what the sea is called, which men row over in every world.

Alvis:

25. Sær 'tis called by men, but silægia with the gods; the vanir call it vagr, the Jotuns alheimr, the Alfar lagastafr, the Dwarfs call it diupan mar.

Vingthor:

26. Tell me, Alvis! etc., how the fire is called, which burns before men's sons in every world.

Alvis:

27. Eldr 'tis called by men, but by the Æsir funi; the Vanir call it vagr, the Jotuns frekr, but the Dwarfs forbrennir; in Hel they call it hrodudr.

Vingthor:

28. Tell me, Alvis! etc., how the forest is called, which grows for the sons of men in every world.

Alvis:

29. Vidr 'tis called by men, but vallarfax by the gods, Hel's inmates call it hlidthangr, the Jotuns eldi, the Alfar fagrlimi; the Vanir call it vondr.

Vingthor:

30. Tell me, Alvis! etc., how the night is called, that Norvi's daughter hight, in every world.

Alvis:

31. Nott it is called by men, but by the gods niol; the wide-ruling powers call it grima, the Jotuns olios, the Alfar svefngaman; the Dwarfs call it draumniorunn.

Vingthor:

32. Tell me, Alvis! etc., how the seed is called, which the sons of men sow in every world.

Alvis:

33. Bygg it is called by men, but by the gods barr, the Vanir call it vaxtr, the Jotuns æti, the Alfar lagastafr; in Hel 'tis hnipinn called.

Vingthor:

34. Tell me, Alvis! etc., how the beer is called, which the sons of men drink in every world.

Alvis:

35. Ol it is called by men, but by the Æsir biorr, the Vanir call it veig, hreina logr the Jotuns, but in Hel 'tis called miodr: Suttung's sons call it sumbl.

Vingthor:

36. In one breast I have never found more ancient lore. By great wiles thou hast, I tell thee, been deluded. Thou art above ground, dwarf! at dawn; already in the hall the sun is shining!

THE LAY OF HARBARD.

Thor journeying from the eastern parts came to a strait or sound, on the other side of which was a ferryman with his boat. Thor cried out:—

1. Who is the knave of knaves, that by the sound stands yonder?

Harbard:

2. Who is the churl of churls, that cries across the water?

Thor:

3. Ferry me across the sound, to-morrow I'll regale thee. I have a basket on my back: there is no better food: at my ease I ate, before I quitted home, herrings and oats, with which I yet feel sated.

Harbard:

4. Thou art in haste to praise thy meal: thou surely hast no foreknowledge; for sad will be thy home: thy mother, I believe, is dead.

Thor:

5. Thou sayest now what seems to every one most unwelcome to know—that my mother is dead.

Harbard:

6. Thou dost not look like one who owns three coun try dwellings, bare-legged thou standest, and like a beggar clothed; thou hast not even breeches.

Thor:

7. Steer hitherward thy boat; I will direct thee where to land. But who owns this skiff, which by the strand thou holdest?

Harbard:

8. Hildolf fief is named who bade me hold it, a man in council wise, who dwells in Radso sound. Robbers he bade me not to ferry, or horse-stealers, but good men only, and those whom I well knew. Tell me then thy name, if thou wilt cross the sound.

Thor:

9. I my name will tell, (although I am an outlaw) and all my kin: I am Odin's son, Meili's brother, and Magni's sire, the gods' mighty leader: With Thor thou here mayest speak. I will now ask how thou art called.

Harbard:

10. I am Harbard called; seldom I my name conceal.

Thor:

11. Why shouldst thou thy name conceal, unless thou crime hast perpetrated?

Harbard:

12. Yet, though I may crime have perpetrated, I will nathless guard my life against such as thou art; unless I death-doomed am.

Thor:

13. It seems to me a foul annoyance to wade across the strait to thee, and wet my garments: but I will pay thee, mannikin! for thy sharp speeches, if o'er the sound I come.

Harbard:

14. Here will I stand, and here await thee. Thou wilt have found no stouter one since Hrungnir's death.

Thor:

15. Thou now remindest me how I with Hrungnir fought, that stout-hearted Jotun, whose head was all of stone; yet I made him fall, and sink before me. What meanwhile didst thou, Harbard?

Harbard:

16. I was with Fiolvari five winters through, in the isle which Algron hight. There we could fight, and slaughter make, many perils prove, indulge in love.

Thor:

17. How did your women prove towards you?

Harbard:

18. Sprightly women we had, had they but been meek; shrewd ones we had, had they but been kind. Of sand a rope they twisted, and from the deep valley dug the earth: to them all I alone was superior in cunning. I rested with the sisters seven, and their love and pleasures shared. What meanwhile didst thou, Thor?

Thor:

19. I slew Thiassi, that stout-hearted Jotun: up I cast the eyes of Allvaldi's son into the heaven serene: they are signs the greatest of my deeds. What meanwhile didst thou, Harbard?

Harbard:

20. Great seductive arts I used against the riders of the night, when from their husbands I enticed them. A mighty Jotun I believed Hlebard to be: a magic wand he gave me, but from his wits I charmed him.

Thor:

21. With evil mind then thou didst good gifts requitè *Harbard:*

22. One tree gets that which, is from another scraped: each one in such case is for self. What meanwhile didst thou, Thor?

Thor:

23. In the east I was, and slew the Jotun brides, crafty in evil, as they to the mountain went. Great would have been the Jotun race, had they all lived; and not a man left in Midgard. What meanwhile didst thou, Harbard?

Harbard:

24. I was in Valland, and followed warfare; princes I excited, but never reconciled. Odin has all the jarls that in conflict fall; but Thor the race of thralls.

Thor:

25. Unequally thou wouldst divide the folk among the Æsir, if thou but hadst the power.

Harbard:

36. Thor has strength over-much, but courage none; from cowardice and fear, thou wast crammed into a glove, and hardly thoughtest thou wast Thor. Thou durst not then, through thy terror, either sneeze or cough, lest Fialar it might hear.

Thor:

27. Harbard, thou wretch! I would strike thee dead, could I but stretch my arm across the sound.

Harbard:

28. Why wouldst thou stretch thy arm across the sound, when there is altogether no offence? But what didst thou, Thor?

Thor:

39. In the east I was, and a river I defended, when the sons of Svarang me assailed, and with stones pelted me, though in their success they little joyed: they were the first to sue for peace. What meanwhile didst thou, Harbard?

Harbard:

30. I was in the east, and with a certain lass held converse; with

that fair I dallied, and long meetings had. I that gold-bright one delighted; the game amused her.

Thor:

31. Then you had kind damsels there?

Harbard:

32. Of thy aid I had need, Thor! in retaining that maiden lily-fair.

Thor:

33. I would have given it thee, if I had had the opportunity.

Harbard:

34. I would have trusted thee, my confidence if thou hadst not betrayed it.

Thor:

35. I am not such a heel-chafer as an old leather shoe in spring.

Harbard:

36. What meanwhile didst thou, Thor?

Thor:

37. The Berserkers' brides I on Læso cudged; they the worst had perpetrated, the whole people, had seduced.

Harbard:

38. Dastardly didst thou act, Thor! when thou didst cudgel women.

Thor:

39. She-wolves they were, and scarcely women. They crushed my ship, which with props I had secured, with iron clubs threatened me, and drove away Thialfi. What meanwhile didst thou, Harbard?

Harbard:

40. I in the army was, which was hither sent, war-banners to raise, lances to reddén.

Thor:

41. Of that thou now wilt speak, as thou wentest forth us hard terms to offer.

Harbard:

42. That shall be indemnified by a hand-ring, such as arbitrators give, who wish to reconcile us.

Thor:

43. Where didst thou learn words than which I never heard more irritating?

Harbard:

44. From men I learned them, from ancient men, whose home is in the woods.

Thor:

45. Thou givest certainly a good name to grave-mounds, when thou callest them, homes in the woods.

Harbard:

46. So speak I of such a subject.

Thor:

47. Thy shrewd words will bring thee evil, if I resolve the sound to ford. Louder than a wolf thou wilt howl, I trow, if of my hammer thou gettest a touch.

Harbard:

48. Sif has a gallant at home; thou wilt anxious be to find him: thou shalt that arduous work perform; it will beseem thee better.

Thor:

49. Thou utterest what comes upmost, so that to me it be most annoying, thou dastardly varlet! I believe thou art lying.

Harbard:

50. I believe I am telling truth. Thou art travelling slowly; thou wouldst have long since arrived, hadst thou assumed another form.

Thor:

51. Harbard! thou wretch! rather is it thou who hast detained me.

Harbard:

52. I never thought that a ferryman could the course of Asa-Thor retard.

Thor:

53. One advice I now will give thee: row hither with thy boat; let us cease from threats; approach the sire of Magni.

Harbard:

54. Go farther from the sound, the passage is refused thee.

Thor:

55. Show me then the way, if thou wilt not ferry me across the water.

Harbard:

56. That's too little to refuse. 'Tis far to go; 'tis to the stock an hour, and to the stone another; then keep the left hand way, until thou reachest Verland; there will Fiorgyn find her son Thor, and point out to him his kinsmen's ways to Odin's land.

Thor:

57. Can I get there to-day?

Harbard:

58. With pain and toil thou mayest get there, while the sun is up, which, I believe, is now nigh.

Thor:

59. Our talk shall now be short, as thou answerest with scoffing only. For refusing to ferry me I will reward thee, if another time we meet.

Harbard:

60. Just go to where all the powers of evil may have thee.

THE JOURNEY OR LAY OF SKIRNIR.

Frey, son of Niord; had one day seated himself in Hlidskialf, and was looking over all regions, when turning his eyes to Jotunheim, he there saw a beautiful girl, as she was passing from her father's dwelling to her bower. Thereupon he became greatly troubled in mind. Frey's attendant was named Skirnir; him Niord desired to speak with Frey; when Skadi said:—

1. Rise up now, Skirnir! go and request our son to speak; and inquire with whom he so sage may be offended.

Skirnir:

2. Harsh words I have from your son to fear, if I go to speak with him, and to inquire with whom he so sage may be offended.

Skirnir:

3. Tell me now, Frey, prince of gods! for I desire to know, why alone thou sittest in the spacious hall the livelong day?

Frey:

4. Why shall I tell thee, thou young man, my mind's great trouble? for the Alfs' illuminator shines every day, yet not for my pleasure.

Skirnir:

5. Thy care cannot, I think, be so great, that to me thou canst not tell it; for in early days we were young together: well might we trust each other.

Frey:

6. In Gymir's courts I saw walking a maid for whom I long. Her arms gave forth light wherewith shone all air and water.

7. Is more desirable to me that maid than to any youth in early days; yet will no one, Æsir or Alfar, that we together live.

Skirnir:

8. Give me but thy steed, which can bear me through the dusk, flickering flame, and that sword, which brandishes itself against the Jotuns' race.

Frey:

9. I will give thee my steed, which can bear thee through the dusk, flickering flame, and that sword, which will itself brandish, if he is bold who raises it.

Skirnir Speaks to the Horse:

10. Dark it is without, 'tis time, I say, for us to go across the misty fells, over the Thursar's land: we shall both return, or the all-potent Jotun will seize us both. Skirnir rides to Jotunheim, to Gymir's mansion, where fierce dogs were chained at the gate of the enclosure that was round Gymir's hall. He rides on to where a cowherd was sitting on a mound, and says to him:

11. Tell me, cowherd! as on the mound thou sittest, and watchest all the ways, how I to the speech may come, of the young maiden, for Gymir's dogs?

Cowherd:

12. Either thou art death-doomed, or thou art a departed one. Speech wilt thou ever lack with the good maid of Gymir.

Skirnir:

13. Better choices than to whine there are for him who is prepared to die: for one day was my age decreed, and my whole life determined.

Gerd:

14. What is that sound of sounds, which I now sounding hear

within our dwelling? The earth is shaken, and with it all the house of Gymir trembles.

A serving-maid:

15. A man is here without, dismounted from his horse's back: he lets his steed browse on the grass.

Gerd:

16. Bid him enter into our hall, and drink of the bright mead; although I fear it is my brother's slayer who waits without.

17. Who is this of the Alfar's, or of the Æsir's sons, or of the wise Vanir's? Why art thou come alone, through the hostile fire, our halls to visit?

Skirnir:

18. I am not of the Alfar's, nor of the Æsir's sons, nor of the wise Vanir's; yet I am come alone, through the hostile fire, your halls to visit.

19. Apples all-golden I have here eleven: these I will give thee, Gerd, thy love to gain, that thou mayest say that Frev to thee lives dearest.

Gerd:

20. The apples eleven I never will accept for any mortal's pleasure; nor will I and Frey, while our lives last, live both together.

Skirnir:

21. The ring too I will give thee, which was burnt with the young son of Odin. Eight of equal weight will from it drop, every ninth night.

Gerd:

22. The ring I will not accept, burnt though it may have been with the young son of Odin. I have no lack of gold in Gymir's courts; for my father's wealth I share.

Skirnir:

23. Seest thou this sword, young maiden! thin, glittering-bright, which I have here in hand? I thy head will sever from thy neck, if thou speakest not favourably to me.

Gerd:

24. Suffer compulsion will I never, to please any man; yet this I foresee, if thou and Gymir meet, ye will eagerly engage in fight.

Skirnir:

25. Seest thou this sword, young maiden! thin, glittering-bright, which I have here in hand? Beneath its edge shall the old Jotun fall: thy sire is death-doomed.

26. With a taming-wand I smite thee, and I will tame thee, maiden! to my will. Thou shalt go thither, where the sons of men shall never more behold thee.

27. On an eagle's mount thou shalt early sit, looking and turned towards Hel. Food shall to thee more loathsome be than is to any one the glistening serpent among men.

28. As a prodigy thou shalt be, when thou goest forth; Hrimnir shall at thee gaze, all beings at thee stare; more wide-known thou shalt become than the watch among the gods, if thou from thy gratings gape.

29. Solitude and disgust, bonds and impatience, shall thy tears with grief augment. Set thee down, and I will tell thee of a whelming flood of care, and a double grief.

30. Terrors shall bow thee down the livelong day, in the Jotuns' courts. To the Hrimthursar's halls, thou shalt each day crawl exhausted, joyless crawl; wail for pastime shalt thou have, and tears and misery.

31. With a three-headed Thurs thou shalt be ever bound, or be without a mate. Thy mind shall tear thee from morn to morn: as the thistle thou shalt be which has thrust itself on the house-top.

32. To the wold I have been, and to the humid grove, a magic wand to get. A magic wand I got.

33. Wroth with thee is Odin, wroth with thee is the Æsir's prince; Frey shall loathe thee, even ere thou, wicked maid! shalt have felt the gods' dire vengeance.

34. Hear ye, Jotuns! hear ye, Hrimthursar! sons of Suttung! also ye, Æsir's friends! how I forbid, how I prohibit man's joy unto the damsel, man's converse to the damsel.

35. Hrimgrimmir the Thurs is named, that shall possess thee, in the grating of the dead beneath; there shall wretched thralls, from the tree's roots, goats' water give thee. Other drink shalt thou, maiden! never get, either for thy pleasure, or for my pleasure.

36. Thurs I cut for thee, and three letters mere: ergi, and oedi, and othola. So will I cut them out, as I have cut them, in, if there need shall be.

Gerd:

37. Hail rather to thee, youth! and accept an icy cup, filled with old mead; although I thought not that I ever should love one of Vanir race.

Skirnir:

38. All my errand will I know, ere I hence ride home. When wilt thou converse hold with the powerful son of Niord?

Gerd:

39. Barri the grove is named, which we both know, the grove of tranquil paths. Nine nights hence, there to Niord's son Gerd will grant delight.

Skirnir then rode home. Frey was standing without, and spoke to him, asking tidings:

40. Tell me, Skirnir! ere thou thy steed unsaddlest, and a foot hence thou goest, what thou hast accomplished in Jotunheim, for my pleasure or thine?

Skirnir:

41. Barri the grove is named, which we both know, the grove of tranquil paths. Nine nights hence, there to Niord's son Gerd will grant delight.

Frey:

42. Long is one night, yet longer two will be; how shall I three endure. Often a month to me less has seemed than half a night of longing.

THE LAY OF RIG.

In ancient Sagas it is related that one of the Æsir named Heimdall, being on a journey to a certain sea-shore, came to a village, where he called himself Rig. In accordance with this Saga is the following:

1. In ancient days, they say, along the green ways went the powerful and upright sagacious As, the strong and active Rig, his onward course pursuing.

2. Forward he went on the mid-way, and to a dwelling came. The door stood ajar, he went in, fire was on the floor. The man and wife sat there, hoary-haired, by the hearth, Ai and Edda, in old guise clad.

3. Rig would counsel give to them both, and himself seated in the middle seat, having on either side the domestic pair.

4. Then Edda from the ashes took a loaf, heavy and thick, and with bran mixed; more besides she laid on the middle of the board; there in a bowl was broth on the table set, there was a calf boiled, of cates most excellent.

5. Then rose he up, prepared to sleep: Rig would counsel give to them both; laid him down in the middle of the bed; the domestic pair lay one on either side.

6. There he continued three nights together, then departed on the mid-way. Nine months then passed way.

7. Edda a child brought forth: they with water sprinkled its swarthy skin, and named it Thræl.

8. It grew up, and well it thrived; of its hands the skin was shriveled, the knuckles knotty, * * * and the fingers thick; a hideous countenance it had, a curved back, and protruding heels.

9. He then began his strength to prove, bast to bind, make of it loads; then faggots carried home, the livelong day.

10. Then to the dwelling came a woman walking, scarred were her foot-soles, her arms sunburnt, her nose compressed, her name was Thy.

11. In the middle seat herself she placed; by her sat the house's son. They spoke and whispered, prepared a bed, Thræl and Thy, and days of care.

12. Children they begat, and lived content: Their names, I think, were Hreimr and Fiosnir, Klur and Kleggi, Kefsir, Fulnir, Drumb, Digraldi, Drott and Hosvir, Lut and Leggialdi. Fences they erected, fields manured, tended swine, kept goats, dug turf.

13. The daughters were Drumba and Kumba, Okkvinkalfa, and Arinnefia, Ysia and Ambatt, Eikintiasna, Totrughypia, and Tronubeina, whence are sprung the race of thralls.

14. Rig then went on, in a direct course, and came to a house; the door stood ajar: he went in; fire was on the floor, man and wife sat there engaged at work.

15. The man was planing wood for a weaver's beam; his beard was trimmed, a lock was on his forehead, his shirt close; his chest stood on the floor.

16. His wife sat by, plied her rock, with outstretched arms, prepared for clothing. A hood was on her head, a loose sark over her breast, a kerchief round her neck, studs on her shoulders. Afi and Amma owned the house.

17. Rig would counsel give to them both; rose from the table, prepared to sleep; laid him down in the middle of the bed, the domestic pair lay one on either side.

18. There he continued three nights together. Nine months then passed away. Amma a child brought forth, they with water sprinkled it, and called it Karl. The mother in linen swathed the ruddy redhead: its eyes twinkled.

19. It grew up, and well thrived; learned to tame oxen, make a plough, houses build, and barns construct, make carts, and the plough drive.

20. Then they home conveyed a lass with pendent keys, and goatskin kirtle; married her to Karl. Snor was her name, under a veil she sat. The couple dwelt together, rings exchanged, spread couches, and a household formed.

21. Children they begat, and lived content. Hal and Dreng, these were named, Held, Thegn, Smith, Breidr-bondi, Bundinskegg, Bui and Boddi, Brattskegg and Segg.

22. But [the daughters] were thus called, by other names: Snot, Brud, Svanni, Svarri, Sprakki, Flíod, Sprund, and Vif, Feima, Ristil; whence are sprung the races of churls.

23. Rig then went thence, in a direct course, and came to a hall: the entrance looked southward, the door was half closed, a ring was on the door-post.

24. He went in; the floor was strewed, a couple sat facing each other, Fadír and Modir, with fingers playing.

25. The husband sat, and twisted string, bent his bow, and arrow-shafts prepared; but the housewife looked on her arms, smoothed her veil, and her sleeves fastened;

26. Her head-gear adjusted. A clasp was on her breast; ample her robe, her sark was blue; brighter was her brow, her breast fairer, her neck whiter than driven snow.

27. Rig would counsel give to them both, and himself seated on the middle seat, having on either side the domestic pair.

28. Then took Modir a figured cloth of white linen, and the table decked. She then took thin cakes of snow-white wheat, and on the table laid.

29. She set forth salvers full, adorned with silver, on the table game and pork, and roasted birds. In a can was wine; the cups were ornamented. They drank and talked; the day was fast departing, Rig would counsel give to them both.

30. Rig then rose, the bed prepared; there he then remained three nights together, then departed on the mid-way. Nine months after that passed away.

31. Modir then brought forth a boy: in silk they wrapped him, with water sprinkled him, and named him Jarl. Light was his hair, bright his cheeks, his eyes piercing as a young serpent's.

32. There at home Jarl grew up, learned the shield to shake, to fix the string, the bow to bend, arrows to shaft, javelins to hurl, spears to brandish, horses to ride, dogs to let slip, swords to draw, swimming to practise.

33. Thither from the forest came Rig walking, Rig walking: runes he taught him, his own name gave him, and his own son declared him, whom he bade possess his alodial fields, his alodial fields, his ancient dwellings.

34. Jarl then rode thence, through a murky way, over humid fells, till to a hall he came. His spear he brandished, his shield he shook, made his horse curvet, and his falchion drew, strife began to raise, the field to redden, carnage to make; and conquer lands.

35. Then he ruled alone over eight vills, riches distributed, gave to all treasures and precious things; lank-sided horses, rings he dispersed, and collars cut in pieces.

36. The nobles drove through humid ways, came to a hall, where Hersir dwelt; there they found a slender maiden, fair and elegant, Erna her name.

37. They demanded her, and conveyed her home, to Jarl espoused her; she under the linen went. They together lived, and well throve, had offspring, and old age enjoyed.

38. Bur was their eldest, Barn the second, Jod and Adal, Arfi, Mog, Nid and Nidjung. They learned games; Son and Svein swam and at tables played. One was named Kund, Kon was youngest.

39. There grew up Jarl's progeny; horses they broke, curved shields, cut arrows, brandished spears.

40. But the young Kon understood runes, æfin-runes, and aldr-runes; he moreover knew men to preserve, edges to deaden, the sea to calm.

41. He knew the voice of birds, how fires to mitigate, assuage and quench; sorrows to allay. He of eight men had the strength and energy.

42. He with Rig Jarl in runes contended, artifices practised, and superior proved; then acquired Rig to be called, and skilled in runes.

43. The young Kon rode through swamps and forests, hurled forth darts, and tamed birds.

44. Then sang the crow, sitting lonely on a bough! "Why wilt thou, young Kon: tame the birds? rather shouldst thou, young Kon! on horses ride * * * and armies overcome.

45. Nor Dan nor Danp halls more costly had, nobler paternal seats, than ye had. They well knew how the keel to ride, the edge to prove, wounds to inflict.

The rest is wanting.

OEGIR'S COMPOTATION, OR LOKI'S ALTERCATION.

Oegir, who is also named Gymir, had brewed beer for the Æsir, after he had got the great kettle, as has been already related. To the entertainment came Odin and his wife Frigg. Thor did not come, being in the East, but his wife Sif was there, also Bragi and his wife Idun, and Ty, who was one-handed, Fenrisulf having bitten off his hand while being bound. Besides these there were Niord and his wife Skadi, Frey and Freyia, and Odin's son Vidar. Loki too was there, and Frey's attendants, Byggvir and Beyla. Many other Æsir and Alfár were also present.

Oegir had two servants, Fimafeng and Eldir. Bright gold was there used instead of fire-light. The beer served itself to the guests. The place was a great sanctuary. The guests greatly praised the excellence of Oegir's servants. This Loki could not hear with patience, and so slew Fimafeng; whereupon the Æsir shook their shields, exclaimed against Loki, chased him into the forest, and then returned to drink. Loki came again, and found Eldir standing without, whom he thus addressed:

1. Tell me, Eldir! ere thou thy foot settest one step forward, on what converse the sons of the triumphant gods at their potation?

Eldir:

2. Of their arms converse, and of their martial fame, the sons of the triumphant gods. Of the Æsir and the Alfár that are here within not one has a friendly word for thee.

Loki:

3. I will go into Oegir's halls, to see the comotation. Strife and hate to the Æsir's sons I bear, and will mix their mead with bale.

Eldir:

4. Knowest thou not that if thou goest into Oegir's halls to see the comotation, but contumely and clamour pourest forth on the kindly powers, they will wipe it all off on thee?

Loki:

5. Knowest thou not, Eldir, that if we two with bitter words contend, I shall be rich in answers, if thou sayest too much?

Loki then went into the hall, but when those present saw who was come in, they all sat silent.

Loki:

6. I Lopt am come thirsty into this hall, from a long journey, to beseech the Æsir one draught to give me of the bright mead.

7. Why gods! are ye so silent, so reserved, that ye cannot speak? A seat and place choose for me at your board, or bid me hie me hence.

Bragi:

8. A seat and place will the Æsir never choose for thee at their board; for well the Æsir know for whom they ought to hold a joyous comotation.

Loki:

9. Odin! dost thou remember when we in early days blended our blood together? When to taste beer thou didst constantly refuse, unless to both 'twas offered?

Odin:

10. Rise up, Vidar! and let the wolf's sire sit at our comotation; that Loki may not utter words of contumely in Oegir's hall.

Vidar then rising, presented Loki with drink, who before drinking thus addressed the Æsir:

11. Hail, Æsir! Hail, Asyniur! And ye, all-holy gods! all, save that one As, who sits within there, Bragi, on yonder bench.

Bragi:

12. A horse and falchion I from my stores will give thee, and also with a ring reward thee, if thou the Æsir wilt not requite with malice. Provoke not the gods against thee.

Loki:

13. Of horse and rings wilt thou ever, Bragi! be in want. Of the Æsir and the Alfár, that are here present, in conflict thou art the most backward, and in the play of darts most timid.

Bragi:

14. I know that were I without, as I am now within, the hall of Oegir, I thy head would bear in my hand, and so for lying punish thee.

Loki:

15. Valiant on thy seat art thou, Bragi! but so thou shouldst not be, Bragi, the bench's pride! Go and fight, if thou art angry; a brave man sits not considering.

Idun:

16. I pray thee, Bragi! let avail the bond of children, and of all adopted sons, and to Loki speak not in reproachful words, in Oegir's hall.

Loki:

17. Be silent, Idun! of all women I declare thee most fond of men, since thou thy arms, carefully washed, didst twine round thy brother's murderer.

Idun:

18. Loki I address not with opprobrious words, in Oegir's hall. Bragi I soothe, by beer excited. I desire not that angry ye fight.

Gefion:

19. Why will ye, Æsir twain, here within, strive with reproachful words? Lopt perceives not that he is deluded, and is urged on by fate.

Loki:

20. Be silent, Gefion! I will now just mention, how that fair youth thy mind corrupted, who thee a necklace gave, and around whom thou thy limbs didst twine?

Odin:

21. Thou art raving, Loki! and hast lost thy wits, in calling Gefion's anger on thee; for all men's destinies, I ween, she knows as thoroughly as I do.

Loki:

22. Be silent, Odin! Thou never couldst allot conflicts between men: oft hast thou given to those to whom thou oughtest not—victory to cowards.

Odin:

23. Knowest thou that I gave to those I ought not—victory to cowards? Thou wast eight winters on the earth below, a milch cow and a woman, and didst there bear children. Now that, methinks, betokens a base nature.

Loki:

24. But, it is said, thou wentest with tottering steps in Samso, and knocked at houses as a Vala. In likeness of a fortune teller, thou wentest among people. Now that, methinks, betokens a base nature.

Frigg:

25. Your doings ye should never publish among men, what ye,

Æsir twain, did in days of yore. Ever forgotten be men's former deeds!

Loki:

26. Be thou silent, Frigg! Thou art Fiorgyn's daughter, and ever hast been fond of men, since Ve and Vili, it is said, thou, Vidrir's wife, didst both to thy bosom take.

Frigg:

27. Know thou that if I had, in Oegir's halls, a son like Baldr, out thou shouldst not go from the Æsir's sons: thou should'st have been fiercely assailed.

Loki:

28. But wilt thou, Frigg! that of my wickedness I more recount? I am the cause that thou seest not Baldr riding to the halls.

Freyia:

29. Mad art thou, Loki! in recounting thy foul misdeeds. Frigg, I believe, knows all that happens, although she says it not.

Loki:

30. Be thou silent, Freyia! I know thee full well; thou art not free from vices: of the Æsir and the Alfar, that are herein, each has been thy paramour.

Freyia:

31. False is thy tongue. Henceforth it will, I think, prate no good to thee. Wroth with thee are the Æsir, and the Asyniur. Sad shalt thou home depart.

Loki:

32. Be silent, Freyia! Thou art a sorceress, and with much evil blended; since against thy brother thou the gentle powers excited. And then, Freyia! what didst thou do?

Niord:

33. It is no great wonder, if silk-clad dames get themselves husbands, lovers; but 'tis a wonder that a wretched As, that has borne children, should herein enter.

Loki:

34. Be silent, Niord! Thou wast sent eastward hence, a hostage from the gods. Hymir's daughters had thee for an utensil, and flowed into thy mouth. *Niord:*

35. 'Tis to me a solace, as I a long way hence was sent, a hostage from the gods, that I had a son, whom no one hates, and accounted is a chief among the Æsir.

Loki:

36. Cease now, Niord! in bounds contain thyself; I will no longer keep it secret: it was with thy sister thou hadst such a son; hardly worse than thyself.

Ty:

37. Frey is best of all the exalted gods in the Æsir's courts: no maid he makes to weep, no wife of man, and from bonds looses all.

Loki:

38. Be silent, Ty! Thou couldst never settle a strife 'twixt two; of thy right hand also I must mention make, which Fenrir from thee tore.

Ty:

39. I of a hand am wanting, but thou of honest fame; sad is the lack of either. Nor is the wolf at ease: he in bonds must bide, until the gods' destruction.

Loki:

40. Be silent, Ty; to thy wife it happened to have a son by me. Nor rag nor penny ever hadst thou, poor wretch! for this injury.

Frey:

41. I the wolf see lying at the river's mouth, until the powers are swept away. So shalt thou be bound, if thou art not silent, thou framer of evil.

Loki:

42. With gold thou boughtest Gymir's daughter, and so gavest away thy sword: but when Muspell's sons through the dark forest ride, thou, unhappy, wilt not have wherewith to fight.

Byggvir:

43. Know that were I of noble race, like Ingun's Frey, and had so fair a dwelling, than marrow softer I would bray that ill-boding crow, and crush him limb by limb.

Loki:

44. What little thing is that I see wagging its tail, and snapping

eagerly? At the ears of Frey thou shouldst ever be, and clatter under mills.

Byggvir:

45. Byggvir I am named, and am thought alert, by all gods and men; therefore am I joyful here, that all the sons of Hropt drink beer together.

Loki:

46. Be silent, Byggvir! Thou couldst never dole out food to men, when, lying in thy truckle bed, thou wast not to be found, while men were fighting.

Heimdall:

47. Loki, thou art drunk, and hast lost thy wits. Why dost thou not leave off, Loki? But drunkenness so rules every man, that he knows not of his garrulity.

Loki:

48. Be silent, Heimdall! For thee in early days was that hateful life decreed: with a wet back thou must ever be, and keep watch as guardian of the gods.

Skadi:

49. Thou art merry, Loki! Not long wilt thou frisk with an unbound tail; for thee, on a rock's point, with the entrails of thy ice-cold son, the gods will bind.

Loki:

50. Know, if on a rock's point, with the entrails of my ice-cold son, the gods will bind me, that first and foremost I was at the slaying, when we assailed Thiassi.

Skadi:

51. Know, if first and foremost thou wast at the slaying, when ye assailed Thiassi, that from my dwellings and fields shall to thee ever cold counsels come.

Loki:

52. Milder wast thou of speech to Laufey's son, when to thy bed thou didst invite me. Such matters must be mentioned, if we accurately must recount our vices.

Then came Sif forth, and poured out mead for Loki in an icy cup, saying:

53. Hail to thee, Loki! and this cool cup receive, full of old mead: at least me alone, among the blameless Æsir race, leave stainless.

He took the horn, drank, and said:

54. So alone shouldst thou be, hadst thou strict and prudent been towards thy mate; but one I know, and, I think, know him well, a favoured rival of Hlorridi, and that is the wily Loki.

Beyla:

55. The fells all tremble: I think Hlorridi is from home journeying. He will bid be quiet him who here insults all gods and men.

Loki:

56. Be silent, Beyla! Thou art Byggvir's wife, and with much evil mingled: never came a greater monster among the Æsir's sons. Thou art a dirty strumpet.

Thor then came in and said:

57. Silence, thou impure being! My mighty hammer, Miollnir, shall stop thy prating. I will thy head from thy neck strike; then will thy life be ended.

Loki:

58. Now the son of earth is hither come. Why dost thou chafe so, Thor? Thou wilt not dare do so, when with the wolf thou hast to fight, and he the all-powerful father swallows whole.

Thor:

59. Silence, thou impure being! My mighty hammer, Miollnir, shall stop thy prating. Up I will hurl thee to the east region, and none shall see thee after.

Loki:

60. Of thy eastern travels thou shouldest never to people speak, since in a glove-thumb thou, Einheri! wast doubled up, and hardly thoughtest thou wast Thor.

Thor:

61. Silence, thou impure being! My mighty hammer, Miollnir, shall stop thy prating: with this right hand I, Hrungrnir's bane, will smite thee, so that thy every bone be broken.

Loki:

62. 'Tis my intention a long life to live, though with thy hammer thou dost threaten me. Skrymir's thongs seemed to thee hard,

when at the food thou couldst not get, when, in full health, of hunger dying.

Thor:

63. Silence, thou impure being! My mighty hammer, Miöllnir, shall stop thy prating. Hrungnir's bane shall cast thee down to Hel, beneath the gratings of the dead.

Loki:

64. I have said before the Æsir, I have said before the Æsir's sons, that which my mind suggested: but for thee alone will I go out; because I know that thou wilt fight.

65. Oegir! thou hast brewed beer; but thou never shalt henceforth a computation hold. All thy possessions, which are herein, flame shall play over, and on thy back shall burn thee.

After this Loki, in the likeness of a salmon, cast himself into the waterfall of Franangr, where the Æsir caught him, and bound him with the entrails of his son Nari; but his other son, Narfi, was changed into a wolf. Skadi took a venomous serpent, and fastened it up over Loki's face. The venom trickled down from it. Sigyn, Loki's wife, sat by, and held a basin under the venom; and when the basin was full, carried the venom out. Meanwhile the venom dropped on Loki, who shrank from it so violently that the whole earth trembled. This causes what are now called earthquakes.

THE LAY OF FIOLSVITH.

1. From the outward wall he saw one ascending to the seat of the giant race.

Fiolesvith:

Along the humid ways haste thee back hence, here, wretch! is no place for thee.

2. What monster is it before the fore-court standing, and hovering round the perilous flame? Whom dost thou seek? Of what art thou in quest? Or what, friendless being! desirest thou to know?

Wanderer:

3. What monster is that, before the fore-court standing, who to the wayfarer offers not hospitality? Void of honest fame, prattler! hast thou lived: but hence hie thee home.

Fiolesvith:

4. Fiolesvith is my name; wise I am of mind, though of food not prodigal. Within these courts thou shalt never come: so now, wretch! take thyself off.

Wanderer:

5. From the eye's delight few are disposed to hurry, where there is something pleasant to be seen. These walls, methinks, shine around golden halls. Here I could live contented with my lot.

Fiolesvith:

6. Tell me, youth; of whom thou art born, or of what race hast sprung.

Wanderer:

7. Vindkald I am called, Varkald was my father named, his sire was Fiolkald.

8. Tell me, Fiolesvith! that which I will ask thee, and I desire to know: who here holds sway, and has power over these lands and costly halls?

Fiolesvith:

9. Menglod is her name, her mother her begat with Svaf, Thorin's son. She here holds sway, and has power over these lands and costly halls.

Vindkald:

10. Tell me, Fiolesvith! etc., what the grate is called, than which among the gods mortals never saw a greater artifice?

Fiolesvith:

11. Thrymgjoll it is called, and Solblindi's three sons constructed it: a fether fastens, every wayfarer, who lifts it from its opening.

Vindkald:

12. Tell me, Fiolesvith! etc., what that structure is called, than which among the gods mortals never saw a greater artifice?

Fiolesvith:

13. Gastropnir it is called, and I constructed it of Leirbrimir's limbs. I have so supported it, that it will ever stand while the world lasts.

Vindkald:

14. Tell me, Fiolesvith! etc., what those dogs are called, that chase away the giantesses, and safety to the fields restore?

Fiolesvith:

15. Gifr the one is called, the other Geri, if thou that wouldst know. Eleven watches they will keep, until the powers perish.

Vindkald:

16. Tell me, Fiolesvith! etc., whether any man can enter while those fierce assailants sleep?

Fiolesvith:

17. Alternate sleep was strictly to them enjoined, since to the watch they were appointed. One sleeps by night, by day the other, so that no night can enter if he comes.

Vindkald:

18. Tell me, Fiolesvith! etc., whether there is any food that men can get, such that they can run in while they eat?

Fiolesvith:

19. Two repasts lie in Vidofnir's wings, if thou that wouldst know: that is alone such food as men can give them and run in while they eat.

Vindkald:

20. Tell me, Fiolesvith! etc., what that tree is called that with its branches spreads itself over every land?

Fiolesvith:

21. Mimameidir it is called; but few men know from what roots it springs: it by that will fall which fewest know. Nor fire nor iron will harm it.

Vindkald:

22. Tell me, Fiolesvith! etc., to what the virtue is of that famed tree applied, which nor fire nor iron will harm?

Fiolesvith:

23. Its fruit shall on the fire be laid, for labouring women; out then will pass what would in remain: so is it a creator of mankind.

Vindkald:

24. Tell me, Fiolesvith! etc., what the cock is called that sits in that lofty tree, and all-glittering is with gold?

Fiolesvith:

25. Vidofnir he is called; in the clear air he stands, in the boughs of Mima's tree: afflictions only brings, together indissoluble, the swart bird at his lonely meal.

Vindkald:

26. Tell me, Fiolesvith! etc., whether there be any weapon, before which Vidofnir may fall to Hel's abode?

Fiolesvith:

27. Hævatein the twig is named, and Lopt plucked it, down by the gate of Death. In an iron chest it lies with Sinmoera, and is with nine strong locks secured.

Vindkald:

28. Tell me, Fiolesvith! etc., whether he will alive return, who seeks after, and will take, that rod?

Fiolesvith:

29. He will return who seeks after, and will take, the rod, if he bears that which few possess to the dame of the glassy clay.

Vindkald:

30. Tell me, Fiolesvith! etc., whether there is any treasure, that mortals can obtain, at which the pale giantess will rejoice?

Fiolesvith:

31. The bright sickle that lies in Vidofnir's wings, thou in a bag shalt bear, and to Sinmoera give, before she will think fit to lend an arm for conflict.

Vindkald:

32. Tell me, Fiolesvith! etc., what this hall is called, which is girt round with a curious flickering flame?

Fiolesvith:

33. Hyr it is called, and it will long tremble as on a lance's point. This sumptuous house shall, for ages hence, be but from hearsay known.

Vindkald:

34. Tell me, Fiolesvith! etc., which of the Æsir's sons has that constructed, which within the court I saw?

Fiolesvith:

35. Uni and Iri, Bari and Ori, Var and Vegdrasil, Dorri and Uri, Delling and Atvard, Lidskialf, Loki.

Vindkald:

36. Tell me, Fiolsvith! etc., what that mount is called, on which I see a splendid maiden stand?

Fiolsvith:

37. Hyfiaberg 'tis called, and long has it a solace been to the bowed-down and sorrowful: each woman becomes healthy, although a year's disease she have, if she can but ascend it.

Vindkald:

38. Tell me, Fiolsvith! etc., how those maids are called, who sit at Menglod's knees in harmony together?

Fiolsvith:

39. Hlif the first is called, the second is Hlifthursa, the third Thiodvarta, Biort and Blid, Blidr, Frid, Eir and Orboda.

Vindkald:

40. Tell me, Fiolsvith! etc., whether they protect those who offer to them, if it should, be needful?

Fiolsvith:

41. Every summer in which men offer to them, at the holy place, no pestilence so great shall come to the sons of men, but they will free each from peril.

Vindkald:

42. Tell me, Fiolsvith! etc., whether there is any man that may in Menglod's soft arms sleep?

Fiolsvith:

43. There is no man who may in Menglod's soft arms sleep, save only Svipdag; to him the sun-bright maid is for wife betrothed.

Vindkald:

44. Set the doors open! Let the gate stand wide; here thou mayest Svipdag see; but yet go learn if Menglod will accept my love.

Fiolsvith:

45. Hear, Menglod! A man is hither come: go and behold the stranger; the dogs rejoice; the house has itself opened. I think it must be Svipdag.

Menglod:

46. Fierce ravens shall, on the high gallows, tear out thy eyes, if thou art lying, that hither from afar is come the youth unto my halls.

47. Whence art thou come? Whence hast thou journeyed? How do thy kindred call thee? Of thy race and name I must have a token, if I was betrothed to thee.

Svipdag:

48. Svipdag I am named, Solbiart was my father named; thence the winds on the cold ways drove me. Urd's decree may no one gainsay, however lightly uttered.

Menglod:

49. Welcome thou art: my will I have obtained; greeting a kiss shall follow. A sight unlooked-for gladdens most persons, when one the other loves.

50. Long have I sat on my loved hill, day and night expecting thee. Now that is come to pass which I have hoped, that thou, dear youth, again to my halls art come.

Svipdag:

51. Longing I have undergone for thy love; and thou, for my affection. Now it is certain, that we shall pass our lives together.

THE LAY OF HYNDLA.

Freyia rides with her favourite Ottar to Hyndla, a Vala, for the purpose of obtaining information respecting Ottar's genealogy, such information being required by him in a legal dispute with Angantyr. Having obtained this, Freyia further requests Hyndla to give Ottar a potion (minnisol) that will enable him to remember all that has been told him. This she refuses, but is forced to comply by Freyia having encircled her cave with flames. She gives him the potion, but accompanied by a malediction, which is by Freyia turned to a blessing.

Freyia:

1. Wake, maid of maids! Wake, my friend! Hyndla! Sister! who in the cavern dwellest. Now there is dark of darks; we will both to Valhall ride, and to the holy fane.

2. Let us Heriafather pray into our minds to enter, he gives and grants gold to the deserving. He gave to Hermod a helm and corslet, and from him Sigmund a sword received.

3. Victory to his sons he gives, but to some riches; eloquence to the great, and to men, wit; fair wind he gives to traders, but poesy to skallds; valour he gives to many a warrior.

4. She to Thor will offer, she to him will pray, that to thee he may be well disposed; although he bears ill will to Jotun females.

5. Now of thy wolves take one from out the stall; let him run with runic rein. *Hyndla:*

6. Sluggish is thy hog the god's way to tread:

Freyia:

7. I will my noble palfrey saddle.

Hyndla:

8. False are thou, Freyia! who temptest me: by thy eyes thou showest it, so fixed upon us; while thou thy man hast on the dead-road, the young Ottar, Innstein's son.

9. Dull art thou, Hyndla! methinks thou dreamest, since thou sayest that my man is on the dead-road with me; there where my hog sparkles with its golden bristles, hight Hildisvini, which for me made the two skilful dwarfs, Dain and Nabbi. From the saddle we will talk: let us sit, and of princely families discourse, of those chieftains who from the gods descend. They have contested for the dead's gold, Ottar the young and Angantyr.

10. A duty 'tis to act so that the young prince his paternal heritage may have, after his kindred.

11. An offer-stead to me he raised, with stones constructed; now is that stone as glass become. With the blood of oxen he newly sprinkled it. Ottar ever trusted in the Asyniur.

12. Now let us reckon up the ancient families, and the races of exalted men. Who are the Skioldungs? Who are the Skilfings? Who the Odlings? Who the Ylfings? Who the hold-born? Who the hers-born? The choicest race of men under heaven?

Hyndla:

13. Thou, Ottar! art of Innstein born, but Innstein was from Alf the Old, Alf was from Ulf, Ulf from Sæfari, but Sæfari from Svan the Red.

14. Thy father had a mother, for her necklaces famed, she, I think, was named Hledis the priestess; Frodi her father was, and her mother Friant: all that stock is reckoned among chieftains.

15. Ali was of old of men the strongest, Halfdan before him, the highest of the Skioldungs; (Famed were the wars by those chieftains led) his deeds seemed to soar to the skirts of heaven.

16. By Eimund aided, chief of men, he Sigtrygg slew with the cold steel. He Almveig had to wife, first of women. They begat and had eighteen sons.

17. From them the Skioldungs, from them the Skilfings, from them the Odlings, from them the Ynglings, from them the hold-born, from them the hers-born, the choicest race of men under heaven. All that race is thine, Ottar Heimski!

18. Hildegun her mother was, of Svafa born and a sea-king. All that race is thine, Ottar Heimski! Carest thou this to know? Wishes thou a longer narrative?

19. Dag wedded Thora, mother of warriors: of that race were born the noble champions, Fradmar, Gyrð, and the Frekis both, Am, Josur, Mar, Alf the Old. Carest thou this to know? Wishes thou a longer narrative?

20. Ketil their friend was named, heir of Klyp; he was maternal grandsire of thy mother. Then was Frodi yet before Kari, but the eldest born was Alf.

21. Nanna was next, Nokkvi's daughter; her son was thy father's kinsman, ancient is that kinship. I knew both Brodd and Horfi. All that race is thine, Ottar Heimski!

22. Isolf, Asolf, Olmod's sons and Skurhild's Skekkil's daughter; thou shalt yet count chieftains many. All that race is thine, Ottar Heimski!

23. Gunnar, Balk, Grim, Ardskafl, Jarnskiold, Thorir, Ulf, Ginnandi, Bui and Brami, Barri and Reifnir, Tind and Hyrfing, the two Haddingis. All that race is thine, Ottar Heimski!

24. To toil and tumult were the sons of Arngrim born, and of Eyfura: ferocious berserker, calamity of every kind, by land and sea, like fire they carried. All that race is thine, Ottar Heimski!

25. I knew both Brodd and Horfi, they were in the court of Hrolf the Old; all descended from Jormunrek, son-in-law of Sigurd. (Listen to my story) the dread of nations, him who Fafnir slew.

26. He was a king, from Volsung sprung, and Hiordis from Hroding; but Eylimi from the Odlings. All that race is thine, Ottar Heimski!

27. Gunnar and Hogni, sons of Giuki; and Gudrun likewise, their sister. Guttorm; was not of Giuki's race, although he brother was of them both. All that race is thine, Ottar Heimski!

28. Harald Hildetonn, born of Hrærekir Slongvanbaugi; he was a son of Aud, Aud the rich was Ivar's daughter; but Radbard was Randver's father. They were heroes to the gods devoted. All that race is thine, Ottar Heimski!

29. There were eleven Æsir reckoned, when Baldr on the pile was laid; him Vali showed himself worthy to avenge, his own brother: he the slayer slew. All that race is thine, Ottar Heimski!

30. Baldr's father was son of Bur: Frey to wife had Gerd, she was Gymir's daughter, from Jotuns sprung and Aurboda; Thiassi also was their relation, that haughty Jotun; Skadi was his daughter.

31. We tell thee much, and remember more: I admonish thee thus much to know. Wishest thou yet a longer narrative?

32. Haki was not the worst of Hvedna's sons, and Hiorvard was Hvedna's father; Heid and Hrossthoif were of Hrimnir's race.

33. All the Valas are from Vidolf; all the soothsayers from Vilmeidr, all the sorcerers from Svarthofdi; all the Jotuns come from Ymir.

34. We tell thee much, and more remember, I admonish thee thus much to know. Wishest thou yet a longer narrative?

35. There was one born, in times of old, with wondrous might endowed, of origin divine: nine Jotun maids gave birth to the gracious god, at the world's margin.

36. Gialp gave him birth, Greip gave him birth, Eistla gave him birth, and Angeia; Ulfrun gave him birth, and Eyrgiafa, Imd and Atla, and Jarnsaxa.

37. The boy was nourished with the strength of earth, with the ice-cold sea, and with Son's blood. We tell thee much, and more remember. I admonish thee thus much to know. Wishest thou a yet longer narrative?

38. Loki begat the wolf with Angrboda, but Sleipnir he begat with Svadilfari: one monster seemed of all most deadly, which from Byleist's brother sprang.

39. Loki, scorched up in his heart's affections, had found a half-burnt woman's heart. Loki became guileful from that wicked woman; thence in the world are all giantesses come.

40. Ocean towers with storms to heaven itself, flows o'er the land; the air is rent: thence come snows and rapid winds; then it is decreed that the rain should cease.

41. There was one born greater than all, the boy was nourished with the strength of earth; he was declared a ruler, mightiest and richest, allied by kinship to all princes.

42. Then shall another come, yet mightier, although I dare not his name declare. Few may see further forth than when Odin meets the wolf.

Freyia:

43. Bear thou the memory-cup to my guest, so that he may all the words repeat of this, discourse, on the third morn, when he and Angantyr reckon up races.

Hyndla:

44. Go thou quickly hence, I long to sleep; more of my wondrous power thou gettest not from me. Thou runnest, my hot friend, out at nights, as among he-goats the she-goat goes.

45. Thou hast run thyself mad, ever longing; many a one has stolen under thy girdle. Thou runnest, my hot friend, out at nights, as among he-goats, the she-goat goes.

Freyia:

46. Fire I strike over thee, dweller of the wood! so that thou goest not ever away from hence.

Hyndla:

47. Fire I see burning, and the earth blazing; many will have their lives to save. Bear thou the cup to Ottar's hand, the mead with venom mingled, in an evil hour!

Freyia:

48. Thy malediction shall be powerless; although thou, Jotun-maid! dost evil threaten. He shall drink delicious draughts. All the gods I pray to favour Ottar.

THE INCANTATION OF GROA.

Son:

1. Wake up, Groa! wake up, good woman! at the gates of death I wake thee! if thou rememberest, that thou thy son badest to thy grave-mound to come.

Mother:

2. What now troubles my only son? With what affliction art thou burthened, that thou thy mother callest, who to dust is come, and from human homes departed?

Son:

3. A hateful game thou, crafty woman, didst set before me, whom my has father in his bosom cherished, when thou badest me go no one knows whither, Menglod to meet.

Mother:

4. Long is the journey, long are the ways, long are men's desires. If it so fall out, that thou thy will obtainest, the event must then be as it may.

Son:

5. Sing to me songs which are good. Mother! protect thy son. Dead on my way I fear to be. I seem too young in years.

Mother:

6. I will sing to thee first one that is thought most useful, which Rind sang to Ran; that from thy shoulders thou shouldst cast what to thee seems irksome: let thyself thyself direct.

7. A second I will sing to thee, as thou hast to wander joyless on thy ways. May Urd's protection hold thee on every side, where thou seest turpitude.

8. A third I will sing to thee. If the mighty rivers to thy life's peril fall, Horn and Rud, may they flow down to Hel, and for thee ever be diminished.

9. A fourth I will sing to thee. If foes assail thee ready on the dangerous road, their hearts shall fail them, and to thee be power, and their minds to peace be turned.

10. A fifth I will sing to thee. If bonds be cast on thy limbs, friendly spells I will let on thy joints be sung, and the lock from thy arms shall start, [and from thy feet the fetter].

11. A sixth I will sing to thee. If on the sea thou comest, more stormy than men have known it, air and water shall in a bag attend thee, and a tranquil course afford thee.

12. A seventh I will sing to thee. If on a mountain high frost should assail thee, deadly cold shall not thy carcase injure, nor draw thy body to thy limbs.

13. An eighth I will sing to thee. If night overtake thee, when out on the misty way, that the dead Christian woman no power may have to do thee harm.

14. A ninth I will sing to thee. If with a far-famed spear-armed Jotun thou words exchangest, of words and wit to thy mindful heart abundance shall be given.

15. Go now ever where calamity may be, and no harm shall obstruct thy wishes. On a stone fast in the earth I have stood within the door, while songs I sang to thee.

16. My son! bear hence thy mother's words, and in thy breast let them dwell; for happiness abundant shalt thou have in life, while of my words thou art mindful.

THE SONG OF THE SUN.

This singular poem, the authorship of which is, in some manuscripts, assigned to Sæmund himself, may be termed a Voice from the Dead, given under the form of a dream, in which a deceased father is supposed to address his son from another world. The first 7 strophes seem hardly connected with the following ones, which, as far as the 32nd consist chiefly in aphorisms with examples, some closely resembling those in the Havamal. In the remaining portion is given the recital of the last illness of the supposed speaker, his death, and the scenes his soul passed through on the way to its final home.

The composition exhibits a strange mixture of Christianity and Heathenism, whence it would seem that the poet's own religion was in a transition state. Of the allusions to Heathenism it is, however, to be observed that they are chiefly to persons and actions of which there is no trace in the Odinic mythology, as known to us, and are possibly the fruits of the poet's own imagination. The

title of the poem is no doubt derived from the allusion to the Sun at the beginning of strophes 39-45.

For an elaborate and learned commentary, with an interlinear version of "the Song of the Sun," the reader may consult "Les Chants de Sol," by Professor Bergmann, Strasbourg & Paris, 1858.

1. Of life and property a fierce freebooter despoiled mankind; over the ways beset by him might no one living pass.
2. Alone he ate most frequently, no one invited he to his repast; until weary, and with failing strength, a wandering guest came from the way.
3. In need of drink that way-worn man, and hungry feigned to be: with trembling heart he seemed to trust him who had been so evil-minded.
4. Meat and drink to the weary one he gave, all with upright heart; on God he thought, the traveller's wants supplied; for he felt he was an evil-doer.
5. Up stood the guest, he evil meditated, he had not been kindly treated; his sin within him swelled, he while sleeping murdered his wary cautious host.
6. The God of heaven he prayed for help, when being struck he woke; but he was doomed the sins of him on himself to take, whom sackless he had slain.
7. Holy angels came from heaven above, and took to them his soul: in a life of purity it shall ever live with the almighty God.
8. Riches and health no one may command, though all go smoothly with him. To many that befalls which they least expect. No one may command his tranquillity.
9. Unnar and Sævaldi never imagined that happiness would fall from them, yet naked they became, and of all bereft, and, like wolves, ran to the forest.
10. The force of pleasure has many a one bewailed. Cares are often caused by women; pernicious they become, although the mighty God them pure created.
11. United were Svafud and Skarthedin, neither might without the other be, until to frenzy they were driven for a woman: she was destined for their perdition.
12. On account of that fair maid, neither of them cared for games or joyous days; no other thing could they in memory bear than that bright form.
13. Sad to them were the gloomy nights, no sweet sleep might they enjoy; but from that anguish rose hate intense between the faithful friends.
14. Hostile deeds are in most places fiercely avenged. To the holm they went, for that fair woman, and each one found his death.
15. Arrogance should no one entertain: I indeed have seen that those who follow her, for the most part, turn from God.
16. Rich were both, Radey and Vebogi, and thought only of their well-being; now they sit and turn their sores to various hearths.
17. They in themselves confided, and thought themselves alone to be above all people; but their lot Almighty God was pleased otherwise to appoint.
18. A life of luxury they led, in many ways, and had gold for sport. Now they are requited, so that they must walk between frost and fire.
19. To thy enemies trust thou never, although they speak thee fair: promise them good: 'tis good to have another's injury as a warning.
20. So it befell Sorli the upright, when he placed himself in Vigolf's power; he confidently trusted him, his brother's murderer, but he proved false.
21. Peace to them he granted, with heart sincere; they in return promised him gold, feigned themselves friends, while they together drank; but then came forth their guile.
22. Then afterwards, on the second day, when they in Rygiardal rode, they with swords wounded him who sackless was, and let his life go forth.
23. His corpse they dragged (on a lonely way, and cut up piece-meal) into a well, and would it hide; but the holy Lord beheld from heaven.
24. His soul summoned home the true God into his joy to come; but the evil doers will, I wean, late be from torments called.

25. Do thou pray the Disir of the Lord's words to be kind to thee in spirit: for a week after, all shall then go happily, according to thy will.

26. For a deed of ire that thou hast perpetrated, never atone with evil: the weeping thou shalt soothe with benefits: that is salutary to the soul.

27. On God a man shall for good things call, on him who has mankind created. Greatly sinful is every man who late finds the Father.

28. To be solicited, we opine, is with all earnestness for that which is lacking: of all things may be destitute he who for nothing asks: few heed the wants of the silent.

29. Late I came, though called betimes, to the supreme Judge's door; thitherward I yearn; for it was promised me, he who craves it shall of the feast partake.

30. Sins are the cause that sorrowing we depart from this world: no one stands in dread, if he does no evil: good it is to be blameless.

31. Like unto wolves all those seem who have a faithless mind: so he will prove who has to go through ways strewn with gleeds.

32. Friendly counsels, and wisely composed, seven I have imparted to thee: consider thou them well, and forget them never: they are all useful to learn.

33. Of that I will speak, how happy I was in the world, and secondly, how the sons of men reluctantly become corpses.

34. Pleasure and pride deceive the sons of men who after money crave; shining riches at last become a sorrow: many have riches driven to madness.

35. Steeped in joys I seemed to men; for little did I see before me: our worldly sojourn has the Lord created in delights abounding.

36. Bowed down I sat, long I tottered, of life was most desirous; but He prevailed who was all-powerful: onward are the ways of the doomed.

37. The cords of Hel were tightly bound round my sides; I would rend them, but they were strong. 'Tis easy free to go.

38. I alone knew, how on all sides my pains increased. The maids of Hel each eve with horror bade me to their home.

39. The sun I saw, true star of day, sink in its roaring home; but Hel's grated doors on the other side I heard heavily creaking.

40. The sun I saw with blood-red beams beset: (fast was I then from this world declining) mightier she appeared, in many ways, than she was before.

41. The sun I saw, and it seemed to me as if I saw a glorious god: I bowed before her, for the last time, in the world of men.

42. The sun I saw: she beamed forth so that I seemed nothing to know; but Gioll's streams roared from the other side mingled much with blood.

43. The sun I saw, with quivering eyes, appalled and shrinking; for my heart in great measure was dissolved in languor.

44. The sun I saw seldom sadder; I had then almost from the world declined: my tongue was as wood become, and all was cold without me.

45. The sun I saw never after, since that gloomy day; for the mountain-waters closed over me, and I went called from torments.

46. The star of hope, when I was born, fled from my breast away; high it flew, settled nowhere, so that it might find rest.

47. Longer than all was that one night, when stiff on my straw I lay; then becomes manifest the divine word: "Man is the same as earth."

48. The Creator God can it estimate and know, (He who made heaven and earth) how forsaken many go hence, although from kindred parted.

49. Of his works each has the reward: happy is he who does good. Of my wealth bereft, to me was destined a bed strewn with sand.

50. Bodily desires men oftentimes seduce, of them has many a one too much: water of baths was of all things to me most loathsome.

51. In the Norns' seat nine days I sat, thence I was mounted on a horse: there the giantess's sun shone grimly through the dripping clouds of heaven.

52. Without and within, I seemed to traverse all the seven nether worlds: up and down, I sought an easier way, where I might have the readiest paths.

53. Of that is to be told, which I first saw, when I to the worlds of torment came:—scorched birds, which were souls, flew numerous as flies.

54. From the west I saw Von's dragons fly, and Glæval's paths obscure: their wings they shook; wide around me seemed the earth and heaven to burst.

55. The sun's hart I saw from the south coming, he was by two together led: his feet stood on the earth, but his horns reached up to heaven.

56. From the north riding I saw the sons of Nidi, they were seven in all: from full horns, the pure mead they drank from the heaven-god's well.

57. The wind was silent, the waters stopped their course; then I heard a doleful sound: for their husbands false-faced women ground earth for food.

58. Gory stones those dark women turned sorrowfully; bleeding hearts hung out of their breasts, faint with much affliction.

59. Many a man I saw wounded go on those gleed-strewed paths; their faces seemed to me all reddened with reeking blood.

60. Many men I saw to earth gone down, who holy service might not have; heathen stars stood above their heads, painted with deadly characters.

61. I saw those men who much envy harbour at another's fortune; bloody runes were on their breasts graved painfully.

62. I there saw men many not joyful; they were all wandering wild: this he earns, who by this world's vices is infatuated.

63. I saw those men who had in various ways acquired other's property: in shoals they went to Castle-covetous, and burthens bore of lead.

64. I saw those men who many had of life and property bereft: through the breasts of those men passed strong venomous serpents.

65. I saw those men who the holy days would not observe: their hands were on hot stones firmly nailed.

66. I saw those men who from pride valued themselves too highly; their garments ludicrously were in fire enveloped.

67. I saw those men who had many false words of others uttered: Hel's ravens from their heads their eyes miserably tore.

68. All the horrors thou wilt not get to know which Hel's inmates suffer. Pleasant sins end in painful penalties: pains ever follow pleasure.

69. I saw those men who had much given for God's laws; pure lights were above their heads brightly burning.

70. I saw those men who from exalted mind helped the poor to aid: angels, read holy books above their heads.

71. I saw those men who with much fasting had their bodies wasted: God's angels bowed before them: that is the highest joy.

72. I saw those men who had put food into their mothers' mouth: their couches were on the rays of heaven pleasantly placed.

73. Holy virgins had cleanly washed the souls from sin of those men, who for a long time had themselves tormented.

74. Lofty cars I saw towards heaven going; they were on the way to God: men guided them who had been murdered wholly without crime.

75. Almighty Father! greatest Son! holy Spirit of heaven! Thee I pray, who hast us all created; free us all from miseries.

76. Biugvor and Iyistvor sit at Herdir's doors, on resounding seat; iron gore falls from their nostrils, which kindles hate among men.

77. Odin's wife rows in earth's ship, eager after pleasures; her sails are reefed late, which on the ropes of desire are hung.

78. Son! I thy father and Solkatla's sons have alone obtained for thee that horn of hart, which from the grave-mound bore the wise Vigdvalin.

79. Here are runes which have engraven Niord's daughters nine, Radvor the eldest, and the youngest Kreppvor, and their seven sisters.

80. How much violence have they perpetrated Svaf and Svaflogi! bloodshed they have excited, and wounds have sucked, after an evil custom.

81. This lay, which I have taught thee, thou shalt before the living sing, the Sun-Song, which will appear in many parts no fiction.

82. Here we part, but again shall meet on the day of men's rejoicing. Oh Lord! unto the dead grant peace, and to the living comfort.

83. Wondrous lore has in dream to thee been sung, but thou hast seen the truth: no man has been so wise created that has before heard the Sun-song.

THE LAY OF VOLUND.

There was a king in Sweden named Nidud: he had two sons and a daughter, whose name was Bodvild. There were three brothers, sons of a king of the Finns, one was called Slagfid, the second Egil, the third Volund. They went on snow-shoes and hunted wild-beasts. They came to Ulfdal, and there made themselves a house, where there is a water called Ulfsiar. Early one morning they found on the border of the lake three females sitting and spinning flax. Near them lay their swan-plumages: they were Valkyriur. Two of them, Hladgud-Svanhvit and Hervor-Alvit, were daughters of King Hlodver; the third was Olrun, a daughter of Kiar of Valland. They took them home with them to their dwelling. Egil had Olrun, Slagfid Svanhvit, and Volund Alvit. They lived there seven years, when they flew away seeking conflicts, and did not return. Egil then went on snow-shoes in search of Olrun, and Slagfid in search of Svanhvit, but Volund remained in Ulfdal. He was a most skilful man, as we learn from old traditions. King Nidud ordered him to be seized, so as it is here related.

1. Maids flew from the south, through the murky wood, Alvit the young, fate to fulfil. On the lake's margin they sat to repose, the southern damsels; precious flax they spun.

2. One of them, of maidens fairest, to his comely breast Egil clasped. Svanhvit was the second, she a swan's plumage bore; but the third, their sister, the white neck clasped of Volund.

3. There they stayed seven winters through; but all the eighth were with longing seized; and in the ninth fate parted them. The maidens yearned for the murky wood, the young Alvit, fate to fulfil.

4. From the chase came the ardent hunters, Slagfid and Egil, found their house deserted, went out and in, and looked around. Egil went east after Olrun, and Slagfid west after Svanhvit;

5. But Volund alone remained in Ulfdal. He the red gold set with the hard gem, well fastened all the rings on linden bast, and so awaited his bright consort, if to him she would return.

6. It was told to Nidud, the Niarars' lord, that Volund alone remained in Ulfdal. In the night went men, in studded corslets, their shields glistened in the waning moon.

7. From their saddles they alighted at the house's gable, thence went in through the house. On the bast they saw the rings all drawn, seven hundred, which the warrior owned.

8. And they took them off, and they put them on, all save one, which they bore away. Came then from the chase the ardent hunter, Volund, gliding on the long way.

9. To the fire he went, bear's flesh to roast. Soon blazed the brushwood, and the arid fir, the wind-dried wood, before Volund.

10. On the bearskin sat, his rings counted, the Alfar's companion: one was missing. He thought that Hlodver's daughter had it, the young Alvit, and that she was returned.

11. So long he sat until he slept; and he awoke of joy bereft: on his hands he felt heavy constraints, and round his feet fetters clasped.

12. "Who are the men that on the rings' possessor have laid bonds? and me have bound?"

13. Then cried Nidud, the Niarars' lord: "Whence gottest thou, Volund! Alfars' chief! our gold, in Ulfdal?"

14. "No gold was here in Grani's path, far I thought our land from the hills of Rhine. I mind me that we more treasures possessed, when, a whole family, we were at home.

15. Hladgud and Hervor were of Hlodver born; known was Olrun, Kiar's daughter, she entered into the house, stood on the floor, her voice moderated: Now is he not mirthful, who from the forest comes."

King Nidud gave to his daughter Bodvild the ring which had been taken from the bast in Volund's house; but he himself bore the sword that had belonged to Volund. The queen said:

16. His teeth he shows, when the sword he sees, and Bodvild's ring he recognizes: threatening are his eyes as a glistening serpent's: let be severed his sinews' strength; and set him then in Sævarstad.

This was done; he was hamstrung, and then set on a certain small island near the shore, called Sævarstad. He there forged for the king all kinds of jewellery work. No one was allowed to go to him, except the king. Volund said:

17. "The sword shines in Nidud's belt, which I whetted as I could most skilfully, and tempered, as seemed to me most cunningly. That bright blade forever is taken from me: never shall I see it borne into Volund's smithy.

18. Now Bodvild wears my consort's red-gold rings: for this I have no indemnity." He sat and never slept, and his hammer plied; but much more speedy vengeance devised on Nidud.

19. The two young sons of Nidud ran in at the door to look, in Sævarstad. To the chest they came, for the keys asked; manifest was their grudge, when therein they looked.

20. Many necklaces were there, which to those youths appeared of the red gold to be, and treasures. "Come ye two alone, to-morrow come; that gold shall be given to you.

21. Tell it not to the maidens, nor to the household folk, nor to any one, that ye have been with me." Early called one the other, brother, brother: "Let us go see the rings."

22. To the chest they came, for the keys asked; manifest was their grudge, when therein they looked. Of those children he the heads cut off, and under the prison's mixen laid their bodies.

23. But their skulls beneath the hair he in silver set, and to Nidud gave; and of their eyes precious stones he formed, which to Nidud's wily wife he sent.

24. But of the teeth of the two breast-ornaments he made, and to Bodvild sent. Then did Bodvild praise the ring: to Volund brought it, when she had broken it: "I dare to no tell it, save alone to thee."

Volund:

25. "I will so repair the fractured gold, that to thy father it shall fairer seem, and to thy mother much more beautiful, and to thyself, in the same degree."

26. He then brought her beer, that he might succeed the better, as on her seat she fell asleep. "Now have I my wrongs avenged, all save one in the wood perpetrated."

27. "I wish," said Volund, "that on my feet I were, of the use of which Nidud's men have deprived me." Laughing Volund rose in air: Bodvild weeping from the isle departed. She mourned her lover's absence, and for her father's wrath.

28. Stood without Nidud's wily wife; then she went in through the hall; but he on the enclosure sat down to rest. "Art thou awake Niarars' lord!"

29. "Ever am I awake, joyless I lie to rest, when I call to mind my children's death: my head is chilled, cold are to me thy counsels. Now with Volund I desire to speak"

30. "Tell me, Volund, Alfars' chief! of my brave boys what is become?"

31. "Oaths shalt thou first to me swear, by board of ship, by rim of shield, by shoulder of steed, by edge of sword, that thou wilt not slay the wife of Volund, nor of my bride cause the death; although a wife I have whom ye know, or offspring within thy court.

32. To the smithy go, which thou hast made, there wilt thou the bellows find with blood besprinkled. The heads I severed of thy boys, and under the prison's mixen laid their bodies.

33. But their skulls beneath the hair I in silver set, and to Nidud gave; and of their eyes precious stones I formed, which to Nidud's wily wife I sent.

34. Of the teeth of the two, breast-ornaments I made, and to Bodvild sent. Now Bodvild goes big with child, the only daughter of you both."

35. "Word didst thou never speak that more afflicted me, or for which I would more severely punish thee. There is no man so tall that he from thy horse can take thee, or so skilful that he can shoot thee down, thence where thou floatest up in the sky."

36. Laughing Volund rose in air, but Nidud sad remained sitting.

37. "Rise up Thakrad, my best of thralls! bid Bodvild, my fair-browed daughter, in bright attire come, with her sire to speak.

38. Is it, Bodvild! true what has been told to me, that thou and Volund in the isle together sat?"

39. "True it is, Nidud! what has been told to thee, that Volund and I in the isle together sat, in an unlucky hour: would it had never been! I could not against him strive, I might not against him prevail."

THE LAY OF HELGI HIORVARD'S SON.

There was a king named Hiorvard, who had four wives, one of whom was named Alfild, their son was named Hedin; the second was named Særeid, their son was Humlung; the third was named Sinriod, their son was Hymling. King Hiorvard made a vow that he would have to wife the most beautiful woman he knew of, and was told that King Svafnir had a daughter of incomparable beauty, named Sigrlinn. He had a jarl named Idmund, whose son Atli was sent to demand the hand of Sigrlinn for the king. He stayed throughout the winter with King Svafnir. There was a jarl there named Franmar, who was the foster-father of Sigrlinn, and had a daughter named Alof. This jarl advised that the maiden should be refused, and Atli returned home. One day when the jarl's son Atli was standing in a grove, there was a bird sitting in the boughs above him, which had heard that his men called the wives which King Hiorvard had the most beautiful. The bird talked, and Atli listened to what it said. The bird said:

1. Hast thou seen Sigrlinn, Svafnir's daughter, of maidens fairest, in her pleasant home? though fair the wives of Hiorvard seem to men in Glasis-lund.

Atli:

2. With Atli, Idmund's son, sagacious bird! wilt thou further speak?

Bird:

I will if the prince will offer to me, and I may choose what I will from the king's court.

Atli:

3. Choose not Hiorvard nor his sons, nor the fair daughters of that prince, nor the wives which the king has. Let us together bargain; that is the part of friends.

Bird:

4. A fane I will chose, offer steeds many, gold-horned cows from the chief's land, if Sigrlinn sleep in his arms, and unconstrained with that prince shall live.

This took place before Atli's journey; but after his return, when the king asked his tidings, he said:

5. Labour we have had, but errand none performed; our horses failed us in the vast fell; we had afterwards a swampy lake to ford; then was denied us Svafnir's daughter with rings adorned, whom we would obtain.

The king commanded them to go a second time, and also went himself. But when they had ascended a fell, and saw in Svavaland the country on fire, and a great reek from the horses of cavalry, the king rode down the fell into the country, and took up his night-quarters by a river. Atli kept watch, and crossed the river, and came to a house, on which sat a great bird to guard it, but was asleep. Atli shot the bird dead with an arrow. In the house he found the king's daughter Sigrlinn, and Alof daughter of Franmar, and brought them both away with him. The jarl Franmar had taken the form of an eagle, and protected them from a hostile army by sorcery. There was a king named Hrodmar, a wooer of Sigrlinn: he had slain the king of Svavaland, and ravaged and burnt the country. Hiorvard obtained Sigrlinn, and Atli Alof. Hiorvard and Sigrlinn had a son tall and comely: he was taciturn and had no fixed name. As he was sitting on a mound he saw nine Valkyriur, one of whom was of most noble aspect. She said:

6. Late wilt thou, Helgi! rings possess, a potent warrior, or Rodulsvellir,—so at morn the eagle sang—if thou art ever silent; although thou, prince! a fierce mood mayest show.

Helgi:

7. What wilt thou let accompany the name of Helgi, maid of aspect bright! since that thou art pleased to give me? Think well over what thou art saying. I will not accept it, unless I have thee also.

Valkyria:

8. Swords I know lying in Sigarsholm, fewer by four than five

times ten: one of them is of all the best, of shields the bale, with gold adorned.

9. A ring is on the hilt, courage in the midst, in the point terror for his use who owns it: along the edge a blood-stained serpent lies, and on the guard the serpent casts its tail.

There was a king named Eylimi; Svava was his daughter; she was a Valkyria and rode through air and water. It was she who gave Helgi that name, and afterwards often protected him in battle. Helgi said:

10. Hiorvard! thou art not a king of wholesome counsel, leader of people! renowned though thou mayest be. Thou hast let fire devour the homes of princes, though harm to thee they none have done.

11. But Hrodmar shall of the rings dispose, which our relations have possessed. That chief reckes little of his life; he thinks only to obtain the heritage of the dead.

Hiorvard answers, that he will supply Helgi with an army, if he will avenge his mother's father. Helgi thereupon seeks the sword that Svava had indicated to him. Afterwards he and Atli went and slew Hrodmar, and performed many deeds of valour. He killed the Jotun Hati, as he sat on a crag. Helgi and Atli lay with their ships in Hatafiord. Atli kept watch in the first part of the night. Hrimgerd, Hati's daughter, said:

12. Who are the chieftains in Hatafiord? With shields are your ships bedecked; boldly ye bear yourselves, few things ye fear, I ween: tell me how your king is named.

Atli:

13. Helgi is his name; but thou nowhere canst to the chief do harm; iron forts are around the prince's fleet; giantesses may not assail us.

Hrimgerd:

14. How art thou named? most powerful champion! How do men call thee? Thy king confides in thee, since in the ship's fair prow he grants thee place.

Atli:

15. Atli I am named, fierce I shall prove to thee; towards giantesses I am most hostile. The humid prow I have oft occupied, and the night-riders slain.

16. How art thou called? corpse-greedy giantess! hag! name thy father. Nine rasts shouldst thou be underground, and a forest grow on thy breast.

Hrimgerd:

17. Hrimgerd I am called, Hati was my father called, whom I knew the mightiest Jotun. He many women had from their dwellings taken, until him Helgi slew.

Atli:

18. Thou wast, hag! before the prince's ships, and layest before them in the fiord's mouth. The chieftain's warriors thou wouldst to Ran consign, had a bar not crossed thee.

Hrimgerd:

19. Now, Atli! thou art wrong, methinks thou art dreaming; thy brows thou lettest over thy eyelids fall. My mother lay before the prince's ships; I Hlodvard's sons drowned in the ocean.

20. Thou wouldst neigh, Atli! if thou wert not a gelding. See! Hrimgerd cocks her tail. Thy heart, methinks, Atli! is in thy hinder part, although thy voice is clear.

Atli:

21. I think I shall the stronger prove, if thou desirest to try; and I can step from the port to land. Thou shalt be soundly cudgeled, if I heartily begin, and let thy tail fall, Hrimgerd!

Hrimgerd:

22. Just come on shore, Atli! if in thy strength thou trustest, and let us meet in Varinsvik. A rib-roasting thou shalt get, brave boy! if in my claws thou comest.

Atli:

23. I will not come before the men awake, and o'er the king hold watch. It would not surprise me, if from beneath our ship some hag arose.

Hrimgerd:

24. Keep watch, Atli! and to Hrimgerd pay the blood-fine for Hati's death. If one night she may sleep with the prince, she for the slain will be indemnified.

Helgi:

25. Lodin is named he who shall thee possess, thou to mankind art loathsome. In Tholley dwells that Thurs, that dog-wise Jotun, of all rock-dwellers the worst: he is a fitting man for thee.

Hrimgerd:

26. Helgi would rather have her who last night guarded the port and men, the gold-bright maiden. She methought had strength, she stepped from port to land, and so secured your fleet. She was alone the cause that I could not the king's men slay.

Helgi:

27. Hear now, Hrimgerd! If I may indemnify thee, say fully to the king: was it one being only, that saved the prince's ships, or went many together?

Hrimgerd:

28. Three troops of maidens; though one maid foremost rode, bright, with helmed head. Their horses shook themselves, and from their manes there sprang dew into the deep dales, hail on the lofty trees, whence comes fruitfulness to man. To me all that I saw was hateful.

Atli:

29. Look eastward now, Hrimgerd! whether Helgi has not stricken thee with death-bearing words. By land and water the king's fleet is safe, and the chief's men also.

30. It is now day, Hrimgerd! and Atli has thee detained to thy loss of life. A ludicrous haven-mark 'twill, indeed, be, where thou a stone-image standest.

King Helgi was a renowned warrior. He came to King Eylimi and demanded his daughter Svava. Helgi and Svava were united, and loved each other ardently. Svava remained at home with her father, but Helgi was engaged in warfare. Svava was a Valkyria as before. Hedin was at home with his father, King Hiorvard in Norway. Returning home alone from the forest on a Yule-eve, Hedin met a troll-wife riding on a wolf, with serpents for reins, who offered to attend him, but he declined her offer; whereupon she said: "Thou shalt pay for this at the Bragi-cup." In the evening solemn vows were made, and the son-hog was led forth, on which the guests laid their hands, and then made solemn vows at the Bragi-cup. Hedin bound himself by a vow to possess Svava, the beloved of his brother Helgi; but repented it so bitterly that he left home and wandered through wild paths to the southern lands, and there found his brother Helgi. Helgi said:

31. Welcome art thou, Hedin! What new tidings canst thou give from Norway? Why art thou, prince! from the land driven, and alone art come to find us?

Hedin:

32. Of a much greater crime I am guilty. I have chosen a royal daughter, thy bride, at the Bragi-cup.

Helgi:

33. Accuse not thyself; true will prove words at drinking uttered by us both. Me a chieftain has to the strand summoned; within three nights I must be there. 'Tis to me doubtful whether I return; then may well such befall, if it so must be.

Hedin:

34. Thou saidst, Helgi! that Hedin well deserved of thee, and great gifts: It would beseem thee better thy sword to redden, than to grant peace to thy foes.

Helgi so spoke, for he had a foreboding that his death was at hand, and that his fylgiur (attendant spirit) had accosted Hedin, when he saw the woman riding on a wolf. There was a king named Alf, a son of Hrodmar, who had appointed a place of combat with Helgi in Sigar's plain within three days. Then said Helgi:

35. On a wolf rode, at evening twilight, a woman who him offered to attend. She well knew, that the son of Sigrlinn would be slain, on Sigar's plain.

There was a great conflict, in which Helgi got his death-wound. 36. Helgi sent Sigar riding, after Eylimi's only daughter: he bade her quickly be in readiness, if she would find the king alive.

Sigar:

37. Helgi has me hither sent, with thee, Svava! thyself to speak. Thee, said the king, he fain would see, ere the noble-born breathes forth his last.

Svava:

38. What has befallen Helgi, Hiorvard's son? I am sorely by afflic-

tions stricken. Has the sea him deluded, or the sword wounded? On that man I will harm inflict.

Sigar:

39. This morning fell, at Frekastein, the king who beneath the sun was of all the best. Alf has complete victory, though this time it should not have been!

Helgi:

40. Hail to thee, Svava! Thy love thou must divide: this in this world, methinks, is our last meeting. They say the chieftain's wounds are bleeding. The sword came too near my heart.

41. I pray thee, Svava!—weep not, my wife!—if thou wilt my voice obey, that for Hedin thou a couch prepare, and the young prince in thy arms clasp.

Svava:

42. I had said, in our pleasant home, when for me Helgi rings selected, that I would not gladly, after my king's departure, an unknown prince clasp in my arms.

Hedin:

43. Kiss me, Svava! I will not return, Rogheim to behold, nor Rodulfsfioll, before I have avenged Hiorvard's son, who was of kings under the sun the best.

Helgi and Svava were, it is said, born again.

THE FIRST LAY OF HELGI HUNDINGCIDE.

1. It was in times of yore, when the eagles screamed, holy waters fell from the heavenly hills; then to Helgi, the great of soul, Borghild gave birth in Bralund.

2. In the mansion it was night: the Norns came, who should the prince's life determine. They him decreed a prince most famed to be, and of leaders accounted best.

3. With all their might they span the fatal threads, when that [he] burghs should overthrow in Bralund. They stretched out the golden cord, and beneath the middle of the moon's mansion fixed it.

4. East and west they hid the ends, where the prince had lands between; towards the north Neri's sister cast a chain, which she bade last for ever.

5. One thing disquieted the Ylfing's offspring, and the woman who had the child brought forth. Sitting on a lofty tree, on prey intent, a raven to a raven said: "I know something.

6. Stands cased in mail Sigmund's son, one day old: now is our day come. His eyes are piercing as a warrior's; the wolf's friend is he: we shall rejoice!"

7. He to the folk appeared a noble chief to be; among men 'twas said that happy times were come; went the king himself from the din of war, noble garlic to bring to the young prince;

8. Gave him the name of Helgi, and Hringstadir, Solfioll, Snæfioll, and Sigarsvellir, Hringstad, Hatun, and Himinvangar, a sword ornate, to Sinfiotli's brother.

9. Then grew up, in his friends' bosom, the high-born youth, in joyous splendour. He paid and gave gold for deserts; nor spared the chief the blood-stained sword.

10. A short time only the leader let warfare cease. When the prince was fifteen winters old, he caused the fierce Hunding to fall, who long had ruled over lands and people.

11. The sons of Hunding afterwards demanded from Sigmund's son treasure and rings; because they had on the prince to avenge their great loss of wealth, and their father's death.

12. The prince would neither the blood-fine pay, nor for the slain indemnity would give. They might expect, he said, a terrific storm of grey arrows, and Odin's ire.

13. The warriors went to the trysting place of swords, which they had appointed at Logafioll. Broken was Frodi's peace between the foes: Vidrir's hounds went about the isle slaughter-greedy.

14. The leader sat under the Arastein, after he had slain Alf and Eyiofl, Hiorvard and Havard, sons of Hunding: he had destroyed all Geirmimir's race.

15. Then gleamed a ray from Logafioll, and from that ray lightnings issued; then appeared, in the field of air, a helmed band of Valkyriur: their corslets were with blood besprinkled, and from their spears shone beams of light.

16. Forthwith inquired the chieftain bold, from the wolf-congress of the southern Disir, whether they would, with the warriors, that night go home?—then was a clash of arms!

17. One from her horse, Hogni's daughter, stilled the crash of shields, and to the leader said: "We have, I ween, other objects than with princely warriors to drink beer.

18. My father has his daughter promised to the fierce son of Granmar; but I have, Helgi! declared Hodbrodd, the proud prince, like to a cat's son.

19. That chief will come in a few days, unless thou him call to a hostile meeting; or the maiden take from the prince."

Helgi:

20. Fear thou not Isung's slayer; there shall be first a clash of foes, unless I am dead.

21. Thence sent messengers the potent prince through air and over water, succours to demand, and abundance of ocean's gleam to men to offer, and to their sons.

22. "Bid them speedily to the ships to go, and those from Brandey to hold them ready." There the king abode, until thither came warriors in hundreds from Hedinsey.

23. From the strands also, and from Stafnsnes, a naval force went out, with gold adorned. Helgi then of Hiorleif asked: "Hast thou mustered the valiant people?"

24. But the young king the other answered: "Slowly" said he "are counted from Tronuey the long-beaked ships, under the seafarers, which sail without in the Oresund,—

25. Twelve hundred faithful men; though in Hatun there is more than half of the king's host—We are to war inured."

26. Then the steersman threw the ship's tents aside, that the princes' people might awake, and the noble chiefs the dawn might see; and the warriors hauled the sails up to the mast in Varinsfiord.

27. There was a dash of oars, and clash of iron, shield against shield resounded: the vikings rowed; roaring went, under the chieftains the royal fleet far from the land.

28. So might be heard, when together came the tempest's sister and the long keels, as when rock and surge on each other break.

29. Higher still bade Helgi the deep sail be hauled. No port gave shelter to the crews; when Oegir's terrific daughter the chieftains' vessels would o'erwhelm,

30. But from above Sigrun intrepid, saved them and their fleet also; from the hand of Ran powerfully was wrested the royal ship at Gnipalund.

31. At eve they halted in Unavagar; the splendid ships might into port have floated, but the crews, from Svarinshaug, in hostile mood, espied the host.

32. Then demanded the god-born Gudmund: "Who is the chieftain that commands the fleet, and that formidable force brings to our land?"

33. Sinfiotli said, slinging up on the yard a red-hued shield with golden rim;—He at the strait kept watch, and able was to answer, and with nobles words exchange—

34. "Tell it at eve, when you feed your pigs, and your dogs lead to their food, that the Ylfings from the east are come, ready to fight at Gnipalund.

35. Hodbrodd will Helgi find in the fleet's midst, a king hard to make flee, who has oft the eagles sated, while thou wast at the mills, kissing the thrall-wenches.

Gudmund:

36. Little dost thou remember of ancient saws, when of the noble thou falsehoods utterest. Thou hast been eating wolves' dainties, and of thy brother wast the slayer; wounds hast thou often sucked with cold mouth; every where loathed, thou hast crawled in caverns.

Sinfiotli:

37. Thou wast a Valacrone in Varinsey, cunning as a fox, a spreader of lies. Thou saidst thou no man wouldst ever marry, no corsleted warrior, save Sinfiotli.

38. A mischievous crone wast thou, a giantess, a Valkyria, insolent, monstrous, in Alfater's hall. All the Einheriar fought with each other, deceitful woman! for thy sake. Nine wolves we begat in Sagunes; I alone was father of them all.

Gudmund:

39. Father thou wast not of Fenriswolves, older than all, as far as I

remember; since by Gnialund, the Thurs-maidens thee emasculated upon Thorsnes.

40. Thou wast Siggeir's stepson, at home under the benches layest, accustomed to the wolf's howl out in the forests: calamity of every kind came over thee, when thou didst lacerate thy brother's breast. Notorious thou mad'st thyself by thy atrocious works.

Sinfjotli:

41. Thou wast Grani's bride at Bravollr, hadst a golden bit, ready for the course. Many a time have I ridden thee tired, hungry and saddled, through the fells, thou hag!

Gudmund:

42. A graceless lad thou wast thought to be, when Gulnir's goats thou didst milk. Another time thou wast a giantess's daughter, a tattered wretch. Wilt thou a longer chat?

Sinfjotli:

43. I rather would at Frekastein the ravens cram with thy carcase, than thy dogs lead to their meat, or thy hogs feed. May the fiend deal with thee!

Helgi:

44. "Much more seemly, Sinfjotli! would it be for you both in battle to engage, and the eagles gladden, than with useless words to contend, however princes may foster hate.

45. Not good to me appear Granmar's sons, yet 'tis right that princes should speak the truth: they have shown, at Moinsheimar, that they have courage to draw the sword."

46. Rapidly they their horses made to run, Svipud and Svegiud, to Solheimar, over dewy dales, dark mountain-sides; trembled the sea of mist, where the men went.

47. The king they met at the burgh's gate, to the prince announced the hostile advent. Without stood Hodbrodd with helmet decked: he the speed noticed of his kinsmen. "Why have ye Hniflungs such wrathful countenances?"

48. "Hither to the shore are come rapid keels, towering masts, and long yards, shields many, and smooth-shaven oars, a king's noble host, joyous Ylfings.

49. Fifteen bands are come to land; but there are out at sea, before Gnialund, seven thousand blue-black ocean-beasts with gold adorned; there is by far their greatest multitude. Now will Helgi not delay the conflict."

Hodbrodd:

50. "Let a bridled steed to the chief assembly run, but Sporvitnir to Sparinsheid; Melnir and Mylnir to Myrkvid; let no man stay behind of those who swords can brandish.

51. Summon to you Hogni, and the sons of Hring, Atli and Yngvi, Alf the old; they will gladly engage in conflict. We will let the Volsungs find resistance."

52. It was a whirlwind, when together came the fallow blades at Frekastein: ever was Helgi Hundingsbani foremost in the host, where men together fought: ardent for battle, disdainful flight; the chieftain had a valiant heart.

53. Then came a maid from heaven, helmed, from above—the clash of arms increased—for the king's protection. Then said Sigrun—well skilled to fly to the host of heroes from Hugin's grove—

54. "Unscathed shalt thou, prince! possess thy people, pillar of Yngvi's race! and life enjoy; thou hast laid low the slow of flight, the chief who caused the dread warrior's death. And thee, O king! well beseem both red-gold rings and a powerful maid: unscathed shalt thou, prince! both enjoy, Hogni's daughter, and Hringstadir, victory and lands: then is conflict ended."

THE SECOND LAY OF HELGI HUNDINGIDE.

King Sigmund, son of Volsung, had to wife Borghild of Bralund. They named their son Helgi, after Helgi Hiorvard's son. Helgi was fostered by Hagal. There was a powerful king named Hunding, after whom the land was called Hundland. He was a great warrior, and had many sons, who were engaged in warfare. There was enmity, both open and concealed, between King Hunding and King Sigmund, and they slew each other's kinsmen. King Sigmund and his kindred were called Volsungs, and Ylfings. Helgi went forth

and secretly explored the court of King Hunding. Heming, Hunding's son, was at home. On departing Helgi met a herdsman, and said:

1. "Say thou to Heming, that Helgi bears in mind who the mailed warrior was, whom the men laid low, when the grey wolf ye had within, and King Hunding thought it was Hamal."

Hamal was the son of Hagal. King Hunding sent men to Hagal in search of Helgi, and Helgi had no other way to save himself than by taking the clothes of a female slave and going to grind. They sought but did not find him. Then said Blind the Baleful:

2. Sharp are the eyes of Hagal's thrall-wench; of no churlish race is she who at the mill stands. The millstones are split, the receiver flies asunder. Now a hard fate has befallen the warrior, when a prince must barley grind: much more fitting to that hand is the falchion's hilt than a mill-handle.

Hagal answered and said:—

3. No wonder 'tis that the receiver rattles, when a royal damsel the handle turns. She hovered higher than the clouds, and, like the vikings, dared to fight, until Helgi made her captive. She is a sister of Sigar and Hogni; therefore has fierce eyes the Ylfing maid.

Helgi escaped and went on board a ship of war. He slew King Hunding, and was afterwards named Helgi Hundingsbani. He lay with his force in Brunavagar, and carried on "strand-hogg" and ate raw flesh. There was a king named Hogni, whose daughter was Sigrun: she was a Valkyria, and rode through the air and over the sea. She was Svava regenerated. Sigrun rode to Helgi, and said:—

4. What men cause a ship along the coasts to float? where do ye warriors a home possess? what await ye in Brunavagar? whither desire ye to explore a way?

Helgi:

5. Hamal causes a ship along the coasts to float; we have home in Hlesey; a fair wind we await in Brunavagar; eastward we desire to explore a way.

Sigrun:

6. Where, O prince! hast thou wakened war, or fed the birds of conflict's sisters? Why is thy corslet sprinkled with blood? Why beneath the helm eat ye raw flesh?

Helgi:

7. It was the Ylfings' son's last achievement,—if thou desirest to know—west of the ocean, that I took bears in Bragalund, and the eagles' race with our weapons sated. Now, maiden! I have said what the reasons were, why at sea we little cooked meat ate.

Sigrun:

8. To a battle thou alludest. Before Helgi has King Hunding been doomed to fall. In conflict ye have engaged, when your kindred ye avenged, and stained with blood the falchion's edge.

Helgi:

9. Why dost thou suppose, sagacious maiden! that it was they, who their kin avenged? Many a warrior's bold sons there are, and hostile to our kindred.

Sigrun:

10. I was not far, leader of people! eager, at many a chieftain's end: yet crafty I account Sigmund's son, when in val-runes the slaughter he announces.

11. A while ago I saw thee commanding the warships, when thou hadst station on the bloody prow, and the cold sea waves were playing. Now, prince! thou wilt from me conceal it, but Hogni's daughter recognizes thee.

Granmar was the name of a powerful prince who dwelt at Svarinshaug. He had many sons: one was called Hodbrodd, the second Gudmund, the third Starkadr. Hodbrodd was at the assembly of kings, and there betrothed himself to Sigrun, the daughter of Hogni. But when she was informed of it, she rode with the Valkyriur through the air and over the sea in quest of Helgi. Helgi was at that time at Logafíoll, warring against the sons of Hunding, where he slew Alf and Eyjolf, Hiorvard and Hervard. Being over-fatigued with the conflict, he was sitting under the Arastein, where Sigrun found him, and running to him, threw her arms around his neck, and, kissing him, told him her errand so as it related in the first Volsungakvida.

12. Sigrun sought the joyous prince, Helgi's hand she forthwith grasped, kissed and addressed the helm-decked king.

13. Then was the chieftain's mind to the lady turned. She declared that she had loved, with her whole heart, Sigmund's son, before she had seen him.

14. "To Hodbrodd I was in th' assembly betrothed, but I another prince would have: yet, chieftain! I foresee my kindred's wrath: I have my father's promise broken."

15. Hogni's daughter spoke not at variance with her heart: she said that Helgi's affection she must possess.

Helgi:

16. Care thou not for Hogni's wrath, nor for the evil mind of thy kin. Thou shalt, young maiden! live with me: of a good race thou art, as I perceive.

Helgi then collected a large fleet and proceeded to Frekastein, and at sea experienced a perilous storm. Lightnings came over them, and the flashes entered the ships. They saw that nine Valkyriur were riding in the air, and recognized Sigrun among them. The storm then abated and they reached land in safety. The sons of Granmar were sitting on a hill as the ships were sailing towards the land. Gudmund leapt on a horse, and rode to explore on the hill by the haven. The Volsungs then lowered their sails, and Gudmund spoke as is before written in the Helgakvida:—

"Who is the leader that commands the fleet, and an appalling host leads to our land?"

This said Gudmund, Granmar's son:

17. Who is the warrior that commands the ships, and lets his golden banner wave o'er his prow? No peace seems to me in that ship's front; it casts a warlike glow around the vikings.

Sinfjotli, Sigmund's son, answered:

18. Here may Hodbrodd Helgi learn to know, the hard of flight, in the fleet's midst: he the possession holds of thy race; he the fishes' heritage has to him subjected.

Gudmund:

19. Therefore ought we first, at Frekastein, to settle together, and decide our quarrels! Hodbrodd! 'tis time vengeance to take, if an inferior lot we long have borne.

Sinfjotli:

20. Rather shalt thou, Gudmund! tend goats, and steep mountain-tops shalt climb, have in thy hand a hazel staff, that will better please thee than judgments of the sword.

Gudmund rode home with intelligence of the hostile armament; whereupon the sons of Granmar collected a host, and many kings came thither. Among them were Hogni, the father of Sigrun, with his sons, Bragi and Dag. There was a great battle, and all the sons of Hogni, and all their chiefs were slain, except Dag, who obtained peace, and swore oaths to the Volsungs. Sigrun, going among the slain, found Hodbrodd at the point of death. She said:

23. Not will Sigrun of Sefaioll, King Hodbrodd! sink in thy arms: thy life is departed. Oft the axe's blade the head approaches of Granmar's sons.

She then met Helgi, and was overjoyed. He said:

24. Not to thee, all-wise maiden! are all things granted, though, I say, in somewhat are the Norns to blame. This morn have fallen at Frekastein Bragi and Hogni: I was their slayer.

25. But at Styrrkleifar King Starkadr, and at Hlebiorg the son of Hrollaug. That prince I saw of all most fierce, whose trunk yet fought when the head was far.

26. On the earth lie the greater number of thy kinsmen, to corpses turned. Thou hast not fought the battle, yet 'twas decreed, that thou, potent maiden! shouldst cause the strife.

Sigrun then wept. Helgi said:

27. Sigrun! console thyself; a Hild thou hast been to us. Kings cannot conquer fate: gladly would I have them living who are departed, if I might clasp thee to my breast.

Helgi obtained Sigrun, and they had sons. Helgi lived not to be old. Dag, the son of Hogni, sacrificed to Odin, for vengeance for his father. Odin lent Dag his spear. Dag met with his relation Helgi in a place called Fioturlund, and pierced him through with his spear. Helgi fell there, but Dag rode to the mountains and told Sigrun what had taken place.

28. Loath am I, sister! sad news to tell thee; for unwillingly I have my sister caused to weep. This morning fell, in Fioturlund, the prince who was on earth the best, and on the necks of warriors stood.

Sigrun:

29. Thee shall the oaths all gnaw, which to Helgi thou didst swear, at the limpid Leiptr's water, and at the cold dank wave-washed rock.

30. May the ship not move forward, which under thee should move, although the wished-for wind behind thee blow. May the horse not run, which under thee should run, although from enemies thou hast to flee!

31. May the sword not bite which thou drawest, unless it sing round thy own head. Then would Helgi's death be on thee avenged, if a wolf thou wert, out in the woods, of all good bereft, and every joy, have no sustenance, unless on corpses thou shouldst spring.

Dag:

32. Sister! thou ravest, and hast lost thy wits, when on thy brother thou callest down such miseries. Odin alone is cause of all the evil; for between relatives he brought the runes of strife.

33. Thy brother offers thee rings of red gold, all Vandilsve and Vigdalir: have half the land, thy grief to compensate, woman ring-adorned! thou and thy sons.

Sigrun:

34. So happy I shall not sit at Sefaioll, neither at morn nor night, as to feel joy in life, if o'er the people plays not the prince's beam of light; if his war-steed runs not under the chieftain hither, to the gold bit accustomed; if in the king I cannot rejoice.

35. So had Helgi struck with fear all his foes and their kindred, as before the wolf the goats run frantic from the fell, of terror full.

36. So himself Helgi among warriors bore, as the towering ash is among thorns, or as the fawn, moistened with dew, that more proudly stalks than all the other beasts, and its horns glisten against the sky.

A mound was raised for Helgi; but when he came to Valhall, Odin offered him the rule over all jointly with himself. Helgi said: 37. Thou, Hunding! shalt for every man a foot-bath get, and fire kindle; shalt bind the dogs, to the horses look, to the swine give wash, ere to sleep thou goest.

A female slave passing at evening by Helgi's mound, saw him riding towards it with many men:

38. Is it a delusion which methinks I see, or the powers' dissolution, that ye, dead men, ride, and your horses with spurs urge on, or to warriors is a home journey granted?

Helgi:

39. 'Tis no delusion which thou thinkst to see, nor of mankind the end, although thou seest us, although our horses we with spurs urge on, nor to warriors is a home-journey granted.

The slave went home and said to Sigrun:

40. Sigrun! go forth from Sefaioll, if the people's chief thou desirest to meet. The mound is opened, Helgi is come, his wounds still bleed; the prince prayed thee that thou wouldst still the trickling blood.

Sigrun entered the mound to Helgi and said:

41. Now am I as glad, at our meeting, as the voracious hawks of Odin, when they of slaughter know; of warm prey, or, dewy-feathered, see the peep of day.

43. I will kiss my lifeless king, ere thou thy bloody corslet layest aside. Thy hair is, Helgi! tumid with sweat of death; my prince is all bathed in slaughter-dew; cold, clammy are the hands of Hogni's son. How shall I, prince! for this make thee amends?

Helgi:

43. Thou art alone the cause, Sigrun of Sefaioll! that Helgi is with sorrow's dew suffused. Thou weepst, gold-adorned! cruel tears, sun-bright daughter of the south! ere to sleep thou goest; each one falls bloody on the prince's breast, wet, cold, and piercing, with sorrow big.

44. We shall surely drink delicious draughts, though we have lost life and lands. No one shall a song of mourning sing, though on my breast he wounds behold. Now are women in the mound enclosed, daughters of kings, with us the dead.

Sigrun prepares a bed in the mound.

35. Here, Helgi! have I for thee a peaceful couch prepared, for the Ylfings' son. On thy breast I will, chieftain! repose, as in my hero's lifetime I was wont.

Helgi:

46. Nothing I now declare unlooked for, at Sefafioll, late or early, since in a corpse's arms thou sleepest, Hogni's fair daughter! in a mound, and thou art living, daughter of kings!

47. Time 'tis for me to ride on the reddening ways: let the pale horse tread the aerial path. I towards the west must go over Vin-dhialm's bridge, ere Salgofnir awakens heroes.

Helgi and his attendants rode their way, but Sigrun and hers proceeded to their habitation. The following evening Sigrun ordered her serving-maid to hold watch at the mound; but at night-fall, when Sigrun came thither, she said:

48. Now would he come, if he to come intended, Sigmund's son, from Odin's halls. I think the hope lessens of the king's coming, since on the ash's boughs the eagles sit, and all the folk to the dreams' tryst are hastening.

Serving-maid:

49. Be not so rash alone to go, daughter of heroes! to the house of draugs: more powerful are, in the night-season, all dead warriors, than in the light of day.

Sigrun's life was shortened by grief and mourning. It was a belief in ancient times that men were regenerated, but that is now regarded as an old crone's fancy. Helgi and Sigrun are said to have been regenerated. He was then called Helgi Haddingiaskadi, and she Kara Halfdan's daughter, as it is said in the songs of Kara; and she also was a Valkyria.

SINFIOTLI'S END.

Sigmund Volsung's son was a king in Frankland. Sinfiotli was the eldest of his sons, the second was Helgi, the third Hamund. Borghild, Sigmund's wife, had a brother named Gunnar; but Sinfiotli her stepson and Gunnar both courted one woman, on which account Sinfiotli slew Gunnar. When he came home, Borghild bade him go away, but Sigmund offered the blood-fine, which it was incumbent on her to accept. At the funeral feast Borghild presented the beer: she took a large horn full of poison, and offered it to Sinfiotli; who, when he looked into the horn, and saw that there was poison in it, said to Sigmund: "the drink ferments!" Sigmund took the horn and drank up the contents. It is said that Sigmund was so strong that no poison could hurt him, either outwardly or inwardly; but that all his sons could endure poison outwardly. Borghild bore another horn to Sinfiotli, and prayed him to drink, when all took place as before. Yet a third time she offered him the horn, using reproachful words on his refusing to drink. He said as before to Sigmund, but the latter answered: "Let it pass through thy lips, my son." Sinfiotli drank and instantly died. Sigmund bore him a long way in his arms, and came to a long and narrow firth, where there was a little vessel and one man in it. He offered Sigmund to convey him over the firth; but when Sigmund had borne the corpse into the vessel, the boat was full-laden. The man then said that Sigmund should go before through the firth. He then pushed off his boat and instantly departed.

King Sigmund sojourned long in Denmark, in Borghild's kingdom, after having espoused her. He then went south to Frankland, to the kingdom he there possessed. There he married Hiordis, the daughter of Eylimi. Sigurd was their son. King Sigmund fell in a battle with the sons of Hunding. Hiordis was afterwards married to Alf, son of King Hialprek, with whom Sigurd grew up in childhood. Sigmund and his sons exceeded all other men in strength, and stature, and courage, and all accomplishments, though Sigurd was foremost of all; and in old traditions he is mentioned as excelling all men, and as the most renowned of warlike kings.

THE FIRST LAY OF SIGURD FAFNICIDE, OR GRIPPIR'S PROPHECY.

Gripir was the name of the son of Eylimi, the brother of Hiordis. He ruled over lands, and was of all men wisest and prescient of the future. Sigurd rode alone, and came to Gripir's dwelling. Sigurd was of a distinguished figure. He found a man to address outside the hall, whose name was Geitir. Sigurd applied to him, and asked: 1. Who here inhabits, in these towers? what nation's king do people name him?

Geitir:

Gripir is named the chief of men, he who rules a firm realm and people.

Sigurd:

2. Is the wise king of the land at home? Will the chief with me come and converse? With him needs speech an unknown man: I desire speedily Gripir to see.

Geitir:

3. The glad king will of Geitir ask, who the man is that demands speech of Gripir.

Sigurd:

Sigurd I am named, born of Sigmund, and Hiordis is the chieftain's mother.

4. Then went Geitir, Gripir to inform: "Here is a man without, a stranger, come; of aspect he is most distinguished. He desires, king! with thee to speak."

5. Goes from the hall the lord of men, and the stranger prince kindly greets: "Welcome, Sigurd! better had it been earlier: but do thou, Geitir! take charge of Grani."

6. They began to talk, and much to tell, when the sagacious men together met. "Tell me, if thou knowest, my mother's brother! how will Sigurd's life fall out?"

Gripir:

7. Thou wilt foremost be of men beneath the sun, exalted high above every king; liberal of gold, but of flight sparing, of aspect comely, and wise of words.

Sigurd:

8. Say thou, sage king! more than I ask, thou wise one, to Sigurd, if thou thinkst to see it: what will first happen for my advancement, when from thy dwelling I shall have departed?

Gripir:

9. First wilt thou, prince! avenge thy father, and for the wrongs of Eylimi wilt retaliate; thou wilt the cruel sons of Hunding boldly lay low; thou wilt have victory.

Sigurd:

10. Say, noble king! kinsman mine! with all forethought, as we hold friendly converse; seest thou of Sigurd those bold achievements, that will highest soar under heaven's regions?"

Gripir:

11. Thou alone wilt slay that glistening serpent, which greedy lies on Gnitaheid; thou shalt of both the slayer be, Regin and Fafnir. Gripir tells truly.

Sigurd:

12. Riches will abound, if I so bring conflict among men, as thou for certain sayest. Apply thy mind, and at length say what will yet my life befall.

Gripir:

13. Thou wilt find Fafnir's lair, and thence wilt take splendid riches, with gold wilt load Grani's back. Thou wilt to Giuki ride, the war-famed prince.

Sigurd:

14. Yet must thou, prince! in friendly speech, foresighted king! more relate. I shall be Giuki's guest, and I shall thence depart: what will next my life befall?

Gripir:

15. A king's daughter will on a mountain sleep, fair, in corslet cased, after Helgi's death. Thou wilt strike with a keen sword, wilt the corslet sever with Fafnir's bane.

Sigurd:

16. The corslet is ript open, the maid begins to speak. When awakened from her sleep, on what will she chiefly with Sigurd converse hold, which to the prince's benefit may tend?

Gripir:

17. She to thee, powerful one! runes will teach, all those which men ought to know; and in every man's tongue to speak, and medicines for healing. May good await thee, king!

Sigurd:

18. Now that is past, the knowledge is acquired, and I am ready thence away to ride. Apply thy mind, and at length say what more will my life befall.

Gripir:

19. Thou wilt find Heimir's dwellings, and the glad guest wilt be

of that great king. Vanished is, Sigurd! that which I foresaw; no further mayest thou Gripir question.

Sigurd:

20. Now bring me grief the words thou speakest; for thou foreseest, king! much further; thou knowest of too great calamity to Sigurd; therefore thou, Gripir! wilt not utter it.

Gripir:

21. Of thy life the early portion lay before me clearest to contemplate. I am not truly accounted sage, nor of the future prescient: that which I knew is gone.

Sigurd:

22. No man I know on the earth's surface, who greater presence has than thou, Gripir! Thou mayest not conceal it, unhappy though it be, or if ill betide my life.

Gripir:

23. Not with vices will thy life be sullied; let that, noble prince! in thy mind be borne; for while mankind exists, thy name, director of the spear-storm! will be supreme.

Sigurd:

24. The worst seems to me, that Sigurd is compelled from the king to part in such uncertainty. Show me the way—all is decreed before—great chieftain! if thou wilt, my mother's brother!

Gripir:

25. To Sigurd I will now openly tell, since the chieftain me thereto compels: thou wilt surely find that I lie not. A certain day is for thy death decreed.

Sigurd:

26. I would not importune the mighty prince, but rather Gripir's good counsel have. Now I fain would know, though grateful it may not be, what prospect Sigurd has lying before him.

Gripir:

27. There is with Heimir a maiden fair of form, she is by men Brynhild named, daughter of Budli; but the dear king Heimir nurtures the hard-souled damsel.

Sigurd:

28. What is it to me, although the maiden be of aspect fair? nurtured with Heimir? That thou, Gripir! must fully declare; for thou foreseest my whole destiny.

Gripir:

29. She will thee bereave of almost every joy, the fair-faced foster-child of Heimir. Thou wilt not sleep, nor of affairs discourse, nor men regard; only this maiden thou wilt see.

Sigurd:

30. What remedy for Sigurd will be applied; tell me that, Gripir! if it seem good to thee. Shall I obtain the damsel? with dowry purchase the lovely royal daughter?

Gripir:

31. Ye will each swear unnumbered oaths, solemnly binding, but few will keep. Hast thou been Giuki's guest one night, thou wilt have forgotten the fair ward of Heimir.

Sigurd:

32. How is that, Gripir! explain it to me: seest thou such fickleness in the king's mind, that with that maiden I shall my engagement break, whom with my whole heart I thought to love?

Gripir:

33. Prince! thou wilt be snared in another's wiles, thou wilt pay the penalty of Grimhild's craft; the bright-haired maiden, her daughter, she to thee will offer. This snare for the king she lays.

Sigurd:

34. Shall I then with Gunnar form relationship, and with Gudrun join in wedlock? Well wived then the king would be, if the pangs of perjury caused me no pain.

Gripir:

35. Thee will Grimhild wholly beguile; she will implore thee Brynhild to demand for the hand of Gunnar, king of Goths: the journey thou wilt forthwith promise to the king's mother.

Sigurd:

36. Evils are at hand, I can that perceive; Sigurd's wits will have wholly perished, if I shall demand for another's hand, a noble maiden whom I well love.

Gripir:

37. All of you will swear mutual oaths, Gunnar, and Hogni, and

thou the third; and ye will forms exchange, when on the way ye are, Gunnar and thou: Gripir lies not.

Sigurd:

38. To what end is that? why shall we exchange forms and manners, when on the way we are? Another fraud will surely follow this, altogether horrible. But say on, Gripir!

Gripir:

39. Thou wilt have Gunnar's semblance, and his manners, thy own eloquence, and great sagacity: there thou wilt betroth the high-minded ward of Heimir: no one can that prevent.

Sigurd:

40. To me that seems worst, that among men I shall be a false traitor called, if such take place. I would not deception practise on a royal maid the most excellent I know.

Gripir:

41. Thou wilt repose, leader of hosts! pure with the maiden, as she thy mother were; therefore exalted, lord of men! while the world endures thy name will be.

42. The nuptials will of both be solemnized, of Sigurd and of Gunnar, in Giuki's halls; then will ye forms exchange, when ye home return; yet to himself will have each his own senses.

Sigurd:

43. Will then Gunnar, chief among men, the noble woman wed? Tell me that, Gripir! although three nights by me the chieftain's bride glad of heart has slept? The like has no example.

44. How for happiness shall hereafter be this affinity? Tell me that, Gripir! Will the alliance for Gunnar's solace henceforth prove, or even for mine?

Gripir:

45. Thou wilt the oaths remember, and must silence keep, and let Gudrun enjoy a happy union. Brynhild nathless will herself think an ill-married woman. She will wiles devise to avenge herself.

Sigurd:

46. What atonement will that woman take, for the frauds we shall have practised on her? From me the maiden has oaths sworn, but never kept, and but little joy.

Gripir:

47. She to Gunnar will plainly declare, that thou didst not well the oaths observe, when the noble king, Giuki's heir, with his whole soul, in thee confided.

Sigurd:

48. What will then follow? let me know that. Will that tale appear as true, or that the noble woman falsely accuses me, and herself also. Tell me that, Gripir!

Gripir:

49. From spite towards thee, and from o'erwhelming grief, the powerful dame will not most wisely act. To the noble woman do thou no further harm, though thou the royal bride with guiles hast circumvented.

Sigurd:

50. Will the prudent Gunnar, Guthorm, and Hogni, at her instigation, then proceed? Will Giuki's sons on their relative redder their swords? Tell me further, Gripir!

Gripir:

51. Then will Gudrun be furious at heart, when her brothers shall on thy death resolve. In nothing then will that wise woman take delight. Such is Grimhild's work.

52. In this thou shalt find comfort, leader of hosts! This fortune is allotted to the hero's life: a more renowned man on earth shall never be, under the sun's abode, than thou wilt be accounted.

Sigurd:

53. Now part we, now farewell! Fate may not be withstood. Now hast thou, Gripir! done as I prayed thee: thou wouldst have fain a happier end foretold me of my life's days, hadst thou been able.

THE SECOND LAY OF SIGURD FAFNICIDE.

Sigurd went to Hialprek's stud and chose himself a horse, which was afterwards named Grani. Regin, Hreidmar's son, was then come to Hialprek; he was the most skilful of men, and a dwarf in stature; he was wise, cruel, and versed in magic. Regin undertook the rearing and instruction of Sigurd, and bore him great affection. He informed Sigurd of his parentage, and how it befell that Odin,

and Hoenir, and Loki came to Andvarafor's (the waterfall of Andvari). In the fall there was an abundance of fish. There was a dwarf named Andvari, who had long lived in the fall in the likeness of a pike, and in which he supplied himself with food. "Our brother," continued Regin, "was named Otr, who often went into the fall in the likeness of an otter. He had caught a salmon, and was sitting on the bank of the river with his eyes shut eating it, when Loki killed him with a stone. The Æsir thought themselves very lucky, and stripped off the otter's skin. That same evening they sought entertainment with Hreidmar, and showed their prize. Thereupon we laid hands on them, and imposed on them, as the redemption of their lives, that they should fill the otter's skin with gold, and cover it over with red gold. They thereupon sent Loki to procure gold. He went to Ran, and obtained her net, and thence proceeded to Andvarafor's, and cast the net before a pike, which leapt into the net. Whereupon Loki said:

1. What fish is this, that in the river swims, and cannot from harm itself protect? Redeem thy life from Hel, and find me the water's flame. *The Pike:*

2. Andvari I am named, Oin was my father named; many a cataract have I passed. A luckless Norn in times of old decreed, that in the water I should wade.

Loki:

3. Tell me, Andvari! if thou wilt enjoy life in the halls of men, what retribution get the sons of mortals, if with foul words they assail each other.

Andvari:

4. Cruel retribution get the sons of mortals, who in Vagdelmir wade: for the false words they have against others uttered, the punishments too long endure.

Loki viewed all the gold that Andvari owned; but when he had produced the gold, he retained a single ring, which Loki also took from him. The dwarf went into his stone and said:

5. That gold which the dwarf possessed, shall to two brothers be cause of death, and to eight princes, of dissension. From my wealth no one shall good derive.

The Æsir produced the gold to Hreidmar, and with it crammed the otter's skin full, and set it up on the feet. They then had to heap up the gold and cover it; but when that was done, Hreidmar, stepping forward, observed a whisker, and required it to be covered; whereupon Odin drew forth the ring "Andvaranaut," and covered the hair. Loki said:

6. There is gold for thee, and thou hast a great redemption for my life. For thy son no blessing is decreed; of both it shall prove the bane.

Hreidmar:

7. Gifts thou hast given, friendly gifts thou hast given not; with a kind heart thou hast not given. Of your lives ye should have been deprived, had I foreknown that peril.

8. But that is worse, what I seem to know,—a strife of kinsmen for a woman. Princes yet unborn I think them to be, for whose hate that gold is destined.

9. The red gold, I trust, I shall possess while I am living: of thy threats I entertain no fear; so take yourselves hence home.

Fafnir and Regin demanded of Hreidmar their share of the blood-fine for their slain brother Otr, which he refused, and Fafnir stabbed his father with a sword while sleeping. Hreidmar called out to his daughters:

10. Lyngheid and Lofnheid! Know my life is departing. To many things need compels. *Lyngheid:*
Few sisters will, although they lose a father, avenge a brother's crime.

Hreidmar:

11. Then bring forth a daughter, wolf-hearted fury! If by a chief thou have not a son. Get for the maid a spouse, in thy great need; then will her son thy wrong avenge.

Hreidmar then died, and Fafnir took all the gold. Regin then requested to have his share of the patrimony, but met with a refusal from Fafnir. Regin thereupon sought counsel of his sister Lyngheid, how he might obtain his patrimony. She said:

12. Thou of thy brother shalt mildly demand thy patrimony and a better spirit. It is not seemly, that with the sword thou shouldst demand thy property of Fafnir.

The foregoing is what Regin related to Sigurd. One day, when he came to Regin's dwelling, he was kindly received, and Regin said:

13. Hither is come the son of Sigmund to our Hall, that man of energy: courage he has greater than I aged man: now of a conflict have I hope from the fierce wolf.

14. I will nurture the bold-hearted prince: now Yngvi's kinsman is to us come; he will be a king under the sun most powerful; over all lands will his destinies resound.

Sigurd was thence forward constantly with Regin, who related to him how Fafnir lay on Gnitaheid in the likeness of a serpent. He had an "Oegis-helm," at which all living beings were terror-stricken. Regin forged a sword for Sigurd, that was named Gram, and was so sharp that immersing it in the Rhine, he let a piece of wool down the stream, when it clove the fleece asunder as water. With that sword Sigurd clove in two Regin's anvil. After that Regin instigated Sigurd to slay Fafnir. He said:

15. Loud will laugh Hunding's sons, they who Eylim of life deprived, if the prince is more desirous to seek red rings, than to avenge his father.

King Hialprek collected a fleet to enable Sigurd to avenge his father. They encountered a great storm, and were driven past a certain promontory. A man was standing on the cliff who said:

16. Who ride yonder, on Rævils horses, the towering billows, the roaring main: the sail-steeds are with sweat bedewed, the wave-courers will not the wind withstand.

Regin:

17. Here am I and Sigurd in sea-trees; a fair wind is given us for death itself: higher than our prow the steep waves dash, the rolling horses plunge. Who is it that inquires?

Hnikar:

18. They called me Hnikar, when I Hugin gladdened, young Vol-sung! and battles fought. Now they mayest call me the ancient of the rock, Feng, or Fiolnir,—I desire a passage.

They turn to the land, the old man goes on board, and the storm abates. Sigurd said:

19. Tell me, Hnikar! since thou knowest the omens both of gods and men, which omens are the best—if to fight 'tis needful—at the swing of glaves?

Hnikar:

20. Good omens there are many, if men but knew them, at the swing of glaves, a faithful fellowship, I think, is the dark raven's, with the sworded warrior.

21. The second is, if, when thou art gone out, and about to depart, thou seest two renown-seeking men standing in the fore-court.

22. The third omen is, if wolves thou hearest howl under the ash-boughs, it will victory to thee announce over helmed warriors, if thou seest them go before thee.

23. No man should fight against the moon's late-shining sister. They have victory, who can see keenly at the play of swords, or to form the wedge-array.

24. Most perilous it is, if with thy foot thou strikest, when thou to battle goest. Wily Disir stand on either side of thee, and wish to see thee wounded.

25. Combed and washed let every brave man be, and at morning fed; for 'tis uncertain whither he at eve may come. 'Tis bad to succumb to fate.

Sigurd fought a great battle with Lyngvi, Hunding's son, and his brothers, in which Lyngvi and his three brothers fell. After the battle Regin said:

26. Now is the bloody eagle, with the trenchant blade, graven on the back of Sigmund's slayer. No son of king, who the earth reddens, and the raven gladdens, is more excellent.

Sigurd returned home to Hialprek, when Regin instigated him to slay Fafnir.

THE LAY OF FAFNIR.

Sigurd and Regin went up to Gnitaheid, and there found Fafnir's slot, or track, along which he crawled to the water. There on the way Sigurd made a large pit, and went down into it. When Fafnir crawled from the gold he blew forth venom, but it flew over Sigurd's head. When Fafnir crept over the pit, Sigurd with his sword

pierced him to the heart. Fafnir shook himself, and beat with his head and tail. Sigurd leapt from the pit, and each looked at the other. Fafnir said:

1. Young fellow! young fellow! by what fellow art thou begot? of what people are thou the son? that thou in Fafnir reddest thy glittering falchion? Thy sword has pierced my heart.

Sigurd concealed his name, because it was the belief in those times, that the words of dying persons were of great power, if they cursed an enemy by his name.

Sigurd:

2. Gofugt-dyr I am called, but I have wandered a motherless child; nor have I a father like the sons of men: alone I wander.

Fafnir:

3. If thou hast no father like the sons of men, by what wonder art thou begotten?

Sigurd:

4. My race, I tell thee, is to thee unknown, and my self also. Sigmund was my father named, my name is Sigurd, who with weapon have assailed thee.

Fafnir:

5. Who has incited thee? why hast thou suffered thyself to be incited to take my life? youth of the sparkling eyes! Thou hadst a cruel father— * * * *

Sigurd:

6. My heart incited me, my hands gave me aid, and my keen sword. Rarely a man is bold, when of mature age, if in childhood he was faint-hearted.

Fafnir:

7. I know if thou hadst chanced to grow in the lap of friends, they would have seen thee fierce in fight. Now thou art a captive, taken in war, and, 'tis said, slaves ever tremble.

Sigurd:

8. Why Fafnir! dost thou upbraid me that I am far from my paternal home? I am not a captive, although in war I was taken: thou hast found that I am free.

Fafnir:

9. Thou wilt account only as angry words all I to thee shall say, but I will say the truth. The jingling gold, and the gleed-red treasure, those rings, shall be thy bane.

Sigurd:

10. Treasure at command every one desires, ever till that one day; for at some time each mortal shall hence to Hel depart.

Fafnir:

11. The Norns' decree thou wilt hold in contempt as from a witless wight: In water thou shalt be drowned, if in wind thou rowest. All things bring peril to the fated.

Sigurd:

12. Tell me, Fafnir! as thou art wise declared, and many things to know: who those Norns are, who help in need, and from babes loose the mothers.

Fafnir:

13. Very diversely born I take those Norns to be: they have no common race. Some are of Æsir-race, some of Alfár-race, some are Dvalin's daughters.

Sigurd:

14. Tell me, Fafnir! as thou art wise declared, and many things to know, how that holm is called, where Surt and the Æsir will sword-liquor together mingle?

Fafnir:

15. Oskopnir it is called; there shall the gods with lances play; Bifrost shall be broken, when they go forth, and their steeds in the river swim.

16. An Oegis-helm I bore among the sons of men, while I o'er the treasures lay; stronger than all I thought myself to be; stronger I found not many!

Sigurd:

17. An Oegis-helm is no protection, where men impelled by anger fight: soon he finds, who among many comes, that no one is alone the boldest.

Fafnir:

18. Venom I blew forth, when on my father's great heritage I lay.

Sigurd:

19. Thou, glistening serpent! didst a great belching make, and

wast so hard of heart. Fierceness so much the greater have the sons of men, when they possess that helm.

Fafnir:

20. Sigurd! I now counsel thee, do thou take my counsel; and hence ride home. The jingling gold, and the gleed-red treasure, those rings, shall be thy bane.

Sigurd:

21. Counsel regarding thee is taken, and I to the gold will ride, on the heath that lies. But lie thou, Fafnir! in the pangs of death, until Hel have thee!

Fafnir:

22. Regin betrayed me, he will thee betray, he of us both will be the bane. Fafnir must, I trow, let forth his life: thine was the greater might!

Regin had gone away while Sigurd slew Fafnir, but came back as Sigurd was wiping the blood from his sword. He said:

23. Hail to thee now, Sigurd! Now hast thou victory won and Fafnir slain: of all the men who tread the earth, thou art, I say, the bravest born.

Sigurd:

24. Uncertain 'tis to know, when we all come to gether, sons of victorious heroes, which is the bravest born. Many a one is bold, who sword has never broken in another's breast.

Regin:

25. Glad are thou now, Sigurd! and in thy gain rejoicing, while Gram, in the grass thou driest. My brother thou to death hast wounded, yet in some degree was I the cause.

Sigurd:

26. Thou didst me counsel, that I should ride o'er high fells hither. Treasure and life had still possess'd that glistening serpent, hadst thou my anger not excited.

Regin then approached Fafnir and cut out his heart with a sword named Ridill, and afterwards drank blood from his wound. He said:

27. Sit now, Sigurd!—but I must go to sleep—and Fafnir's heart hold to the fire. Of this refection I would fain partake, after that drink of blood.

Sigurd:

28. Thou wentst far off, while I in Fafnir my keen sword reddened. With my strength I strove against the serpent's might, while in the ling thou layest.

Regin:

29. Long hadst thou allowed in the ling to lie that Jotun old, hadst thou the sword not used that I forged for thee, thy keen-edged glave.

Sigurd:

30. Valour is better than might of sword, when foes embittered fight; for a brave man I have ever seen gain victory with a dull sword.

31. For the brave 'tis better than for the timid to join in the game of war; for the joyous it is better than for the sad, let come whatever may.

Sigurd took Fafnir's heart and roasted it on a stick. When he thought it roasted enough, and the blood frothed from it, he touched it with his finger, to try whether it were quite done. He burnt his finger and put it in his mouth; and when Fafnir's heart's blood touched his tongue he understood the language of birds. He heard the eagles chattering among the branches. One eagle said:

38. There sits Sigurd sprinkled with blood; Fafnir's heart at the fire he roasts. Wise methinks were the ring-dispenser, if he the listening life-pulp ate.

Second eagle:

33. There lies Regin communing with himself; he will beguile the youth, who in him trusts: in rage he brings malicious words together, the framer of evil will avenge his brother.

Third eagle:

34. By the head shorter, let him the hoary babbler send hence to Hel; then can he all the gold possess alone, the mass that under Fafnir lay.

Fourth eagle:

35. He would, methinks, be prudent, if he could have your friendly counsel, my sisters! If he would bethink himself, and Hugin glad-den. There I expect the wolf, where his ears I see.

Fifth eagle:

36. Not so prudent is that tree of battle, as I that martial leader had supposed, if he one brother lets depart, now he the other has of life bereft.

Sixth eagle:

37. He is most simple, if he longer spares that people's pest. There lies Regin, who has betrayed him.—He cannot guard against it.

Seventh eagle:

38. By the head shorter let him make the ice-cold Jotun, and of his rings deprive him; then of that treasure thou, which Fafnir owned, sole lord wilt be!

Sigurd:

39. Fate shall not so resistless be, that Regin shall my death-word bear; for the brothers both shall speedily go hence to Hel.

Sigurd cut off the head of Regin, and then ate Fafnir's heart, and drank the blood of both Regin and Fafnir. He then heard the eagles saying:

40. Bind thou, Sigurd! the red-gold rings. It is not kingly many things to fear. I a maid know by far the fairest, with gold adorned. Couldst thou but her obtain!

Second eagle:

41. To Giuki lead all-verdant ways; the fates point out to wayfarers where the good king a born daughter has; her wilt thou, Sigurd! purchase with bridal gifts.

Third eagle:

42. There stands a hall on the high Hindarfiall, without 'tis all with fire surrounded; sagacious men have it constructed of the resplendent radiance of the flood.

Fourth eagle:

43. On the fell I know a warrior maid to sleep, over her waves the linden's bane. Ygg whilom stuck a sleep-thorn in the robe of the maid who would heroes choose.

44. Thou, youth! mayest see the helmed maiden, her whom Vingskornir from battle bore. May not Sigdrifa's slumber break the son of warriors, against the Norns' decrees.

Sigurd rode along Fafnir's track to his lair, which he found open. The doors and door-posts were of iron; of iron also were all the beams in the house; but the treasure was buried in the earth. Sigurd found there a great quantity of gold, and filled two chests with it. He took thence the Oegis-helm, a golden corslet, the sword named Hrotti, and many precious things, all which he laid on Grani; but the horse would not proceed until Sigurd had mounted on his back.

THE LAY OF SIGDRIFA.

Sigurd rode up the Hindarfiall, and directed his course southwards towards Frankland. In the fell he saw a great light, as if a fire were burning, which blazed up to the sky. On approaching it, there stood a "skialdborg," and over it a banner. Sigurd went into the skialdborg, and saw a warrior lying within it asleep, completely armed. He first took the helmet off the warrior's head, and saw that it was a woman. Her corslet was as fast as if it had grown to her body. With his sword Gram he ripped the corslet from the upper opening downwards, and then through both sleeves. He then took the corslet off from her, when she awoke, sat up and, on seeing Sigurd, said:

1. What has my corslet cut? why from sleep have I started? who has cast from me the fallow bands?

Sigurd:

Sigmund's son has just now ript the raven's perch, with Sigurd's sword.

She:

2. Long have I slept, long been with sleep oppressed, long are mortals' sufferings! Odin is the cause that I have been unable to cast off torpor.

Sigurd sat down and asked her name. She then took a horn filled with mead, and gave him the *minnis-cup*:

She:

3. Hail to Day! Hail to the sons of Day! To Night and her daughter hail! With placid eyes behold us here, and here sitting give us victory.

4. Hail to the Æsir! Hail to the Asyniur! Hail to the bounteous earth! Words and wisdom give to us noble twain, and healing hands while we live.

She was named Sigdrifa, and was a Valkyria. She said that two kings had made war on each other, one of whom was named Hialmgunnar; he was old and a great warrior, and Odin had promised him victory. The other was Agnar, a brother of Hoda, whom no divinity would patronize. Sigdrifa overcame Hialmgunnar in battle; in revenge for which Odin pricked her with a sleep-thorn, and declared that henceforth she should never have victory in battle, and should be given in marriage. "But I said to him, that I had bound myself by a vow not to espouse any man who could be made to fear." Sigurd answers, and implores her to teach him wisdom, as she had intelligence from all regions:

Sigdrifa:

5. Beer I bear to thee, column of battle! with might mingled, and with bright glory: 'tis full of song, and salutary saws, of potent incantations, and joyous discourses.

6. Sig-runes thou must know, if victory (sigr) thou wilt have, and on thy sword's hilt grave them; some on the chapes, some on the guard, and twice name the name of Ty.

7. Ol- (beer-) runes thou must know, if thou wilt not that another's wife thy trust betray, if thou in her confide. On the horn must they be graven, and on the hand's back, and Naud on the nail be scored.

8. A cup must be blessed, and against peril guarded, and garlick in the liquor cast: then I know thou wilt never have mead with treachery mingled.

9. Biarg- (help-) runes thou must know, if thou wilt help, and loose the child from women. In the palm they must be graven, and round the joints be clasped, and the Disir prayed for aid.

10. Brim- (sea-) runes thou must know, if thou wilt have secure afloat thy sailing steeds. On the prow they must be graven, and on the helm-blade, and with fire to the oar applied. No surge shall be so towering, nor waves so dark, but from the ocean thou safe shalt come.

11. Lim- (branch-) runes thou must know, if thou a leech wouldst be, and wounds know how to heal. On the bark they must be graven, and on the leaves of trees, of those whose boughs bent eastward.

12. Mal- (speech-) runes thou must know, if thou wilt that no one for injury with hate requite thee. Those thou must wind, those thou must wrap round, those thou must altogether place in the assembly, where people have into full court to go.

13. Hug- (thought-) runes thou must know, if thou a wiser man wilt be than every other. Those interpreted, those graven, those devised Hropt, from the fluid, which had leaked from Heiddraupnir's head, and from Hoddroppnir's horn.

14. On a rock he stood, with edged sword, a helm on his head he bore. Then spake Mim's head its first wise word, and true sayings uttered.

15. They are, it said, on the shield graven, which stands before the shining god, on Arvkr's ear, and on Alsvið's hoof, on the wheel which rolls under Rognir's car, on Sleipnir's teeth, and on the sledge's bands.

16. On the bear's paw, and on Bragi's tongue, on the wolf's claws, and the eagle's beak, on bloody wings, and on the bridge's end, on the releasing hand, and on healing's track.

17. On glass and on gold, on amulets of men, in wine and in wort, and in the welcome seat, on Gungnir's point, and on Grani's breast, on the Norn's nail, and the owl's neb.

18. All were erased that were inscribed, and mingled with the sacred mead, and sent on distant ways: they are with the Æsir, they are with the Alfar, some with the wise Vanir, some human beings have.

19. Those are bok-runes, those are biarg-runes, and all ol- (beer-) runes, and precious megin- (power-) runes, for those who can, without confusion or corruption, turn them to his welfare. Use, if thou hast understood them, until the powers perish.

20. Now thou shalt choose, since a choice is offered thee, keen armed warrior! my speech, or silence: think over it in thy mind. All evils have their measure.

Sigurd:

21. I will not flee, though thou shouldst know me doomed. I am

not born a craven. Thy friendly counsels all I will receive, as long as life is in me.

Sigrdrifa:

22. This I thee counsel first: that towards thy kin thou bear thee blameless. Take not hasty vengeance, although they raise up strife: that, it is said, benefits the dead.

23. This I thee counsel secondly: that no oath thou swear, if it be not true. Cruel bonds follow broken faith: accursed is the faith-breaker.

24. This I thee counsel thirdly: that in the assembly thou contend not with a fool; for an unwise man oft utters words worse than he knows of.

25. All is vain, if thou holdest silence; then wilt thou seem a craven born, or else truly accused. Doubtful is a servant's testimony, unless a good one thou gettest. On the next day let his life go forth, and so men's lies reward.

26. This I counsel thee fourthly: if a wicked sorceress dwells by the way, to go on is better than there to lodge, though night may overtake thee.

27. Of searching eyes the sons of men have need, when fiercely they have to fight: oft pernicious women by the way-side sit, who swords and valour deaden.

28. This I thee counsel fifthly: although thou see fair women on the benches sitting, let not their kindred's silver over thy sleep have power. To kiss thee entice no woman.

29. This I thee counsel sixthly: although among men pass offensive tipsy talk, never while drunken quarrel with men of war: wine steals the wits of many.

30. Brawls and drink to many men have been a heartfelt sorrow; to some their death, to some calamity: many are the griefs of men!

31. This I thee counsel seventhly: if thou hast disputes with a daring man, better it is for men to fight than to be burnt within their dwelling.

32. This I thee counsel eighthly: that thou guard thee against evil, and eschew deceit. Entice no maiden, nor wife of man, nor to wantonness incite.

33. This I thee counsel ninthly: that thou corpses bury, wherever on the earth thou findest them, whether from sickness they have died, or from the sea, or are from weapons dead.

34. Let a mound be raised for those departed; let their hands and head be washed, combed, and wiped dry, ere in the coffin they are laid: and pray for their happy sleep.

35. This I thee counsel tenthly: that thou never trust a foe's kinsman's promises, whose brother thou hast slain, or sire laid low. There is a wolf in a young son, though he with gold be gladdened. 36. Strifes and fierce enmities think not to be lulled, no more than deadly injury. Wisdom and fame in arms a prince not easily acquires, who shall of men be foremost.

37. This I counsel thee eleventhly: that thou at evil look, what course it may take. A long life, it seems to me the prince may [not] enjoy;—fierce disputes will arise.

Sigurd said: "A wiser mortal exists not, and I swear that I will possess thee, for thou art after my heart." She answered: "Thee I will have before all others, though I have to choose among all men." And this they confirmed with oaths to each other.

FRAGMENTS OF THE LAY OF SIGURD AND BRYNHILD.

[Sigurd then rides away from Hindarfiall, and journeys on till he comes to the habitation of Heimir, who was married to Beckhild, Brynhild's sister. Alsvið, Heimir's son, who was at play when Sigurd arrived at the mansion, received him kindly, and requested him to stay with him. Sigurd consented, and remained there a short time. Brynhild was at that time with Heimir, and was weaving within a gold border the great exploits of Sigurd.

One day, when Sigurd was come from the forest, his hawk flew to the window at which Brynhild sat employed on weaving. Sigurd ran after it, saw the lady, and appeared struck with her handiwork and beauty. On the following day Sigurd went to her apartment, and Alsvið stood outside the door shafting arrows. Sigurd said: "Hail to thee, lady!" or "How fares it with thee?" She answered: "We are well, my kindred and friends are living, but it is

uncertain what any one's lot may be till their last day." He sat down by her. Brynhild said: "This seat will be allowed to few, unless my father comes." Sigurd answered: "Now is that come to pass which thou didst promise me." She said: "Here shalt thou be welcome." She then arose, and her four maidens with her, and, approaching him with a golden cup, bade him drink. He reached towards her and took hold of her hand together with the cup, and placed her by him, clasped her round the neck, kissed her, and said: "A fairer than thou was never born." She said: "It is not wise to place faith in women, for they so often break their promise." He said: "Better days will come upon us, so that we may enjoy happiness," Brynhild said: "It is not ordained that we shall live together, for I am a shield-maiden (skjaldmær)." Sigurd said: "Then will our happiness be best promoted, if we live together; for harder to endure is the pain which herein lies than from a keen weapon." Brynhild said: "I shall be called to the aid of warriors, but thou wilt espouse Gudrun, Giuki's daughter." Sigurd said: "No king's daughter shall ensnare me, therefore have not two thoughts on that sub ject; and I swear by the gods that I will possess thee and no other woman." She answered to the same effect. Sigurd thanked her for what she had said to him, and gave her a gold ring. He remained there a short time in great favour.

Sigurd now rode from Heimir's dwelling with much gold, until he came to the palace of King Giuki, whose wife was named Grimhild. They had three sons, Gunnar, Hogni, and Guthorm. Gudrun was the name of their daughter. King Giuki entreated Sigurd to stay there, and there he remained a while. All appeared low by the side of Sigurd. One evening the sorceress Grimhild rose and presented a horn to Sigurd, saying: "Joyful for us is thy presence, and we desire that all good may befall thee. Take this horn and drink." He took it and drank, and with that drink forgot both his love and his vows to Brynhild. After that, Grimhild so fascinated him that he was induced to espouse Gudrun, and all pledged their faith to Sigurd, and confirmed it by oaths. Sigurd gave Gudrun to eat of Fafnir's heart, and she became afterwards far more austere than before. Their son was named Sigmund.

Grimhild now counselled her son Gunnar to woo Brynhild, and consulted with Sigurd, in consequence of this design. Brynhild had vowed to wed that man only who should ride over the blazing fire that was laid around her hall. They found the hall and the fire burning around it. Gunnar rode Goti, and Hogni Holknir. Gunnar turns his horse towards the fire, but it shrinks back. Sigurd said: "Why dost thou shrink back, Gunnar?" Gunnar answers: "My horse will not leap this fire," and prays Sigurd to lend him Grani. "He is at thy service," said Sigurd. Gunnar now rides again towards the fire, but Grani will not go over. They then changed forms. Sigurd rides, having in his hand the sword Gram, and golden spurs on his heels. Grani runs forward to the fire when he feels the spur. There was now a great noise, as it is said:

1. The fire began to rage, and the earth to tremble, high rose the flame to heaven itself: there ventured few chiefs of people through that fire to ride, or to leap over.

2. Sigurd Grani with his word urged, the fire was quenched before the prince, the flame allayed before the glory-seeker with the bright saddle that Rok had owned.

Brynhild was sitting in a chair as Sigurd entered. She asks who he is, and he calls himself Gunnar Giuki's son. "And thou art destined to be my wife with thy father's consent. I have ridden through the flickering flame (vafrologi) at thy requisition." She said: "I know not well how I shall answer this." Sigurd stood erect on the floor resting on the hilt of his sword. She rose embarrassed from her seat, like a swan on the waves, having a sword in her hand, a helmet on her head, and wearing a corslet. "Gunnar," said she, "speak not so to me, unless thou art the foremost of men; and then thou must slay him who has sought me, if thou hast so much trust in thyself." Sigurd said: "Remember now thy promise, that thou wouldst go with that man who should ride through the flickering flame." She acknowledged the truth of his words, stood up, and gave him a glad welcome. He tarried there three nights, and they prepared one bed. He took the sword Gram and laid it between them. She inquired why he did so. He said that it was enjoined him so to act towards his bride on their marriage, or he would receive his death. He then took from her the ring called

Andvaranaut, and gave her another that had belonged to Fafnir. After this he rode away through the same fire to his companions, when Gunnar and he again changed forms, and they then rode home.

Brynhild related this in confidence to her foster-father Heimir, and said: "A king named Gunnar has ridden through the flickering flame, and is come to speak with me; but I told him that Sigurd alone might so do, to whom I gave my vow at Hindarfiall, and that he only was the man." Heimir said that what had happened must remain as it was. Brynhild said: "Our daughter Aslaug thou shalt rear up here with thee." Brynhild then went to her father, King Budli, and he with his daughter Brynhild went to King Giuki's palace. A great feasting was afterwards held, when Sigurd remembered all his oaths to Brynhild, and yet kept silence. Brynhild and Gunnar sat at the drinking and drank wine.

One day Brynhild and Gudrun went to the river Rhine, and Brynhild went farther out into the water. Gudrun asked why she did so? Brynhild answered: "Why shall I go on along with thee in this more than in anything else?" "I presume that my father was more potent than thine, and my husband has performed more valorous deeds, and ridden through the blazing fire. Thy husband was King Hialprek's thrall." Gudrun answered angrily: "Thou shouldst be wiser than to venture to vilify my husband, as it is the talk of all that no one like to him in every respect has ever come into the world; nor does it become thee to vilify him, as he was thy former husband, and slew Fafnir, and rode through the fire, whom thou thoughtest was King Gunnar; and he lay with thee, and took from thee the ring Andvaranaut, and here mayest thou recognize it." Brynhild then looking at the ring, recognized it, and turned pale as though she were dead. Brynhild was very taciturn that evening, and Gudrun asked Sigurd why Brynhild was so taciturn. He dissuaded her much from making this inquiry, and said that at all events it would soon be known.

On the morrow, when sitting in their apartment, Gudrun said: "Be cheerful, Brynhild! What is it that prevents thy mirth?" Brynhild answered: "Malice drives thee to this; for thou hast a cruel heart." "Judge not so," said Gudrun. Brynhild continued: "Ask about that only which is better for thee to know; that is more befitting women of high degree. It is good, too, for thee to be content, as all goes according to thy wishes." Gudrun said: "It is premature to glory in that: this forebodes something; but what instigates thee against us?" Brynhild answered: "Thou shalt be requited for having espoused Sigurd; for I grudge thee the possession of him." Gudrun said: "We knew not of your secret." Brynhild answered: "We have had no secret, though we have sworn oaths of fidelity; and thou knowest that I have been deceived, and I will avenge it." Gudrun said: "Thou art better married than thou deservest to be, and thy violence must be cooled." "Content should I be," said Brynhild, "didst thou not possess a more renowned husband than I." Gudrun answered: "Thou hast as renowned a husband; for it is doubtful which is the greater king." Brynhild said: "Sigurd overcame Fafnir, and that is worth more than all Gunnar's kingdom, as it is said:

"Sigurd the serpent slew, and that henceforth shall be by none forgotten, while mankind lives: but thy brother neither dared through the fire to ride, nor over it to leap."

Gudrun said: "Grani would not run through the fire under King Gunnar: but he [Gunnar] dared to ride." Brynhild said: "Let us not contend: I bear no good will to Grimhild." Gudrun said: "Blame her not; for she is towards thee as to her own daughter." Brynhild said: "She is the cause of all the evil which gnaws me. She presented to Sigurd the pernicious drink, so that he no more remembered me." Gudrun said: "Many an unjust word thou utterest, and this is a great falsehood." Brynhild said: "So enjoy Sigurd as thou hast not deceived me, and may it go with thee as I imagine." Gudrun said: "Better shall I enjoy him than thou wilt wish; and no one has said he has had too much good with me at any time." Brynhild said: "Thou sayest ill and wilt repent of it. Let us cease from angry words, and not indulge in useless prattle. Long have I borne in silence the grief that dwells in my breast: I have also felt regard for thy brother. But let us talk of other things." Gudrun said: "Your imagination looks far forward."

Brynhild then lay in bed, and King Gunnar came to talk with her, and begged her to rise and give vent to her sorrow; but she would not listen to him. They then brought Sigurd to visit her and learn whether her grief might not be alleviated. They called to memory their oaths, and how they had been deceived, and at length Sigurd offered to marry her and put away Gudrun; but she would not hear of it. Sigurd left the apartment, but was so greatly affected by her sorrow that the rings of his corslet burst asunder from his sides, as is said in the Sigurdarkvida:

"Out went Sigurd from that interview into the hall of kings, writhing with anguish; so that began to start the ardent warrior's iron-woven sark off from his sides."

Brynhild afterwards instigated Gunnar to murder Sigurd, saying that he had deceived them both and broken his oath. Gunnar consulted with Hogni, and revealed to him this conversation. Hogni earnestly strove to dissuade him from such a deed, on account of their oaths. Gunnar removed the difficulty, saying: "Let us instigate our brother Guthorm; he is young and of little judgment, and is, moreover, free of all oaths; and so avenge the mortal injury of his having seduced Brynhild." They then took a serpent and the flesh of a wolf, and had them cooked, and gave them to him to eat, and offered him gold and a large realm, to do the deed, as is said:

"The forest-fish they roasted, and the wolf's carcass took, while some to Guthorm dealt out gold; gave him Geri's flesh with his drink, and many other things steeped therein."

With this food he became so furious, that he would instantly perpetrate the deed. On this it is related as in the Sigurdarkvida, when Gunnar and Brynhild conversed together.]

THE THIRD LAY OF SIGURD FAFNICIDE.

1. It was of old that Sigurd, the young Volsung, Giuki sought, after his conflict, received the pledge of friendship from the two brothers; oaths exchanged the bold of deed.
2. A maid they offered him, and treasures many, Gudrun, Giuki's youthful daughter. Drank and conversed, many days together, Sigurd the young and Giuki's sons.
3. Until they went to woo Brynhild, and with them Sigurd, the youthful Volsung, rode in company, who knew the way. He would have possessed her, if her possess he might.
4. Sigurd the southern laid a naked sword, a glittering falchion, between them; nor the damsel did he kiss, nor did the Hunnish king to his arm lift her. He the blooming maid to Giuki's son delivered.
5. She to herself of body was of no sin conscious, nor at her death-day, of any crime, that could be a stain, or thought to be: intervened therein the grisly fates.
6. Alone she sat without, at eve of day, began aloud with herself to speak: "Sigurd must be mine; I must die, or that blooming youth clasp in my arms."
7. "Of the words I have uttered I now repent; he is Gudrun's consort, and I am Gunnar's. The hateful Norns long suffering have decreed us."
8. Oftentimes she wandered, filled with evil thoughts, o'er ice and icebergs, every eve, when he and Gudrun had to their couch withdrawn, and Sigurd her in the coverings wrapt, the Hunnish king his wife caressed.
9. "Devoid I go of spouse and pleasure; I will beguile myself with vengeful thoughts."
10. By those fits of fury she was impelled to murder. "Thou, Gunnar! shalt wholly lose my land, and myself also. Never shall I be happy, king! with thee."
11. I will return thither from whence I came, to my near kindred, my relations; there will I remain, and slumber life away, unless thou Sigurd cause to be slain, and a king become than the other greater.
12. Let the son go together with the father, the young wolf may not longer be fostered. For whom will vengeance be the easier to appease, if the son lives?"
13. Wroth was Gunnar, and with grief borne down; in his mind revolved, sat the whole day; he knew not well, nor could devise, what were most desirable for him to do, or were most fitting to be

done, when he should find himself of the Volsung bereft, and in Sigurd a great loss sustain.

14. Much he thought, and also long, that it did not often happen, that from their royal state women withdrew. Hogni he then to counsel summoned, in whom he placed the fullest trust.

15. "Of all to me Brynhild, Budli's daughter, is the dearest; she is the chief of women: rather will I my life lay down than that fair one's treasures lose.

16. "Wilt thou the prince for his wealth circumvent? good 'tis to command the ore of Rhine, and at ease over riches rule, and in tranquillity happiness enjoy."

17. This alone Hogni for answer gave: "It beseems us not so to do, by the sword to break sworn oaths, oaths sworn, and plighted faith.

18. "We know not on earth men more fortunate, while we four over the people rule, and the Hun lives, that warlike chief; nor on earth, a race more excellent, if we five sons long shall foster, and the good progeny can increase.

19. I know full well whence the causes spring: Brynhild's importunity is over-great.

20. We will Guthorm, our younger brother, and not over-wise, for the deed prepare: he is free from sworn oaths, sworn oaths, and plighted faith."

21. Easy it was to instigate the ferocious spirit: in the heart of Sigurd stood his sword.

22. On vengeance bent, the warrior in his chamber hurled his brand after the fierce assassin; to Guthorm flew dartlike Gram's gleaming steel from the king's hand.

23. Fell the murderer in two parts, arms and head flew far away, but his feet's part fell backwards on the place.

24. Sunk in sleep was Gudrun, in her bed, void of cares, by Sigurd's side: but she awoke of joys bereft, when in the blood of Frey's friend she swam.

25. So violently struck she her hands together, that the stout of heart rose in his bed. "Weep not, Gudrun! so cruelly, my blooming bride! thy brothers live.

26. An heir I have, alas! too young; he cannot flee from the hostile house; among themselves they recently have dark and evil counsels devised.

27. Never henceforth, although seven thou bear, will such a son to the trysting with them ride. Full well I know how this has befallen: Brynhild the sole cause is of all the evil.

28. Me the maiden loved more than any man; but towards Gunnar I sinned not; affinity I held sacred, and sworn oaths; thence forward I was called his consort's friend."

29. The woman gave forth sighs, and the king his life. So violently she struck her hands together, that the beakers on the wall responsive rang, and in the court the geese loudly screamed.

30. Laughed then Brynhild, Budli's daughter, once only, from her whole soul, when in her bed she listened to the loud lament of Giuki's daughter.

31. Then said Gunnar, the hawk-bearing prince: "Laugh not thereat, thou barbarous woman! glad on thy couch, as if good awaited thee. Why hast thou lost that beauteous colour? authoress of crime! Methinks to death thou art doomed.

32. Well dost thou deserve, above all women, that before thy eyes, we should lay Atli low, that thou shouldst see thy brother's blood-streaming sore, his gory wounds shouldst have to bind."

33. Then said Brynhild, Budli's daughter: "No one provokes thee, Gunnar! complete is thy work of death. Little does Atli thy hatred fear; his life will outlast thine, and his might be ever greater.

34. Gunnar! will tell thee, though thou well knowest it, how early we resolved on crimes. I was o'er-young and unrestrained, with wealth endowed, in my brother's house.

35. Nor did I desire to marry any man, before ye Giukungs rode to our dwelling, three on horseback, powerful kings: would that journey had never been!

36. Then myself I promised to the great king, who with gold sat on Grani's back. In eyes he did not you resemble, nor was at all in aspect like: yet ye thought yourselves mighty kings.

37. And to me apart Atli said, that he would not have our heritage divided, nor gold nor lands, unless I let myself be married, nor

grant me any part of the acquired gold, which he to me a girl had given to possess, and to me a child in moneys counted.

38. Then distracted was my mind thereon, whether I should engage in conflict, and death dispense, valiant in arms, for my brother's quarrel. That would then be world-widely known, and to many a one bring heartfelt anguish.

39. Our reconciliation we let follow: to me it had been more pleasing the treasures to accept, the red-gold rings of Sigmund's son: nor did I another's gold desire; him alone I loved, none other. Men-skogul had not a changing mind.

40. All this will Atli hereafter find, when he shall hear of my funeral rites completed; for never shall the heavy-hearted woman with another's husband pass her life. Then will my wrongs be all avenged."

41. Up rose Gunnar, prince of warriors, and round his consort's neck laid his hands; all drew nigh, yet each one singly, through honest feeling, to dissuade her.

42. She from her neck those about her cast; she let no one stay her from her long journey.

43. He then called Hogni to consultation. "I will that all our folk to the hall be summoned, thine with, mine—now 'tis most needful—to see if we can hinder my consort's fatal course, till from our speech a hindrance may come: then let us leave necessity to rule."

44. To him Hogni answer gave: "Let no one hinder her from the long journey, whence may she never born again return. Unblest she came on her mother's lap, born in the world for ceaseless misery, for many a man's heartfelt sorrow."

45. Downcast he from the meeting turned to where the lady treasures distributed. She was viewing all she owned: hungry female thralls and chamber-women. She put on her golden corset—no good meditated—ere herself she pierced, with the sword's point.

46. On the pillow she turned to the other side, and, wounded with the glave, on her last counsels thought.

47. "Now let come those who desire gold, and aught less precious, to receive from me. To every one I give a gilded necklace, needle-work and coverlets, splendid weeds."

48. All were silent, thought on what to do, and all together answer gave: "Too many are there dead: we will yet live, still be hungry hall-servants, to do what fitting is."

49. At length after reflection, the lady linen-clad, young in years, words in answer uttered: "I desire that none, dead to entreaty, should by force, for our sake, lose their life.

50. Yet o'er your bones will burn fewer ornaments, Menia's good meal, when ye go hence me to seek.

51. Gunnar! sit down, I will tell to thee, that of life now hopeless is thy bright consort. Thy vessel will not be always afloat, though I shall have my life resigned.

52. With Gudrun thou wilt be reconciled, sooner than thou thinkest: that wise woman has by the king sad memorials, after her consort's death.

53. There is born a maid, which her mother rears; brighter far than the clear day, than the sun's beam, will Svanhild be.

54. Gudrun thou wilt give to an illustrious one, a warrior, the bane of many men: not to her wish will she be married; Atli will come her to espouse, Budli's son, my brother.

55. Much have I in memory how I was treated, when ye me so cruelly had deceived: robbed I was of happiness, while my life lasted.

56. Thou wilt desire Oddrun to possess, but Atli will permit it not; in secret ye will each other meet. She will love thee, as I had done, if us a better fate had been allotted.

57. Thee will Atli barbarously treat; in the narrow serpent-den wilt thou be cast.

58. It will too come to pass, not long after, that Atli will his soul resign, his prosperity, and cease to live; for Gudrun in her vengeance him in his bed will slay, through bitterness of spirit, with the sword's sharp edge.

59. More seemly would appear our sister Gudrun, had she in death her first consort followed, had but good counsel been to her given, or she a soul possessed resembling mine—

60. Faintly I now speak—but for our sake she will not lose her life. She will be borne on towering billows to King Jonakr's paternal soil. Doubts will be in the resolves of Jonakr's sons.

61. She will Svanhild send from the land, her daughter, and Sigurd's. Her will destroy Bikki's counsel; for Jormunrek for evil lives. Then will have passed away all Sigurd's race, and Gudrun's tears will be the more.
62. One prayer I have to thee yet to make, in this world 'twill be my last request: Let in the plain be raised a pile so spacious, that for us all like room may be, for those who shall have died with Sigurd.
63. Bedeck the pile about with shields and hangings, a variegated corpse-cloth, and multitude of slain. Let them burn the Hun on the one side of me;
64. Let them with the Hun burn on the other side, my household slaves, with collars splendid, two at our heads, and two hawks; then will all be equally distributed.
65. Let also lie between us both the sword with rings adorned, the keen-edged iron, so again be placed, as when we both one couch ascended, and were then called by the name of consorts.
66. Then will not clang against his heel the hall's bright gates, with splendid ring, if my train him hence shall follow. Then will our procession appear not mean.
67. For him will follow five female thralls, eight male slaves of gentle birth, fostered with me, and with my patrimony, which to his, daughter Budli gave.
68. Much I have said, and more would say, if the sword would grant me power of speech. My voice fails, my wounds swell: truth only I have uttered; so I will cease."

FRAGMENTS OF THE LAY OF BRYNHILD.

Gunnar:

1. "Why art thou, Brynhild! Budli's daughter! absorbed in evil and murderous thoughts? What injury has Sigurd done thee, that thou the hero wilt of life bereave?"

Brynhild:

2. "Sigurd to me oaths has sworn, oaths sworn, all falsehoods. He at a time deceived me when he should have been of all oaths most observant."

Hogni:

3. "Thee Brynhild has in anger instigated evil to perpetrate, harm to execute. She grudges Gudrun her happy marriage, and thee, possession of herself." * * *
4. Some a wolf roasted, some a snake cut up, some to Guthorm served the wolf, before they might, eager for crime, on the mighty man lay their hands.
5. Without stood Gudrun, Giuki's daughter, and these words first of all uttered: "Where is now Sigurd, lord of warriors, seeing that my kinsmen foremost ride?"
6. Hogni alone to her answer gave: "Asunder have we Sigurd hewed with our swords; his grey steed bends o'er the dead chief."
7. Then said Brynhild, Budli's daughter: "Well shall ye now enjoy arms and lands. Sigurd would alone over all have ruled, had he a little longer life retained."
8. Unseemly it had been that he should so have ruled over Giuki's heritage and the Goths' people, when he five sons, for the fall of hosts, eager for warfare, had begotten."
9. Then laughed Brynhild—the whole burgh resounded—once only from her whole heart: "Well shall ye enjoy lands and subjects, now the daring king ye have caused to fall."
10. Then said Gudrun, Giuki's daughter: "Much thou speakest, things most atrocious: may fiends have Gunnar, Sigurd's murderer! Souls malevolent vengeance awaits."
11. Sigurd had fallen south of Rhine: loud from a tree a raven screamed: "With your blood will Atli his sword's edges redden; the oaths ye have sworn your slaughter shall dissolve."
12. Evening was advanced, much was drunken, then did pleasant talk of all kinds pass: all sank in sleep, when to rest they went. Gunnar alone was wakeful longer than all:
13. He began his foot to move, and much with himself to speak; the warlike chief in his mind pondered, what during the conflict the raven and the eagle were ever saying, as they rode home.
14. Brynhild awoke, Budli's daughter, daughter of Skioldungs, a little ere day: "Urge me or stay me—the mischief is perpetrated—my sorrow to pour forth, or to suppress it."

15. All were silent at these words; few understood the lady's conduct, that weeping she should begin to speak of what she laughing had desired.

16. "In my dream, Gunnar! all seemed so horrid, in the chamber all was dead; my bed was cold; and thou, king! wast riding of joy bereft, with fetters loaded, to a hostile host. So will ye all, race of Niflungs! be of power deprived, perjurers as ye are!

17. Ill Gunnar! didst thou remember, when blood ye in your footsteps both let flow; now hast thou him ill for all that requited, because he would prove himself foremost.

18. Then was it proved, when the hero had ridden to see me, to woo me, how the warlike chief whilom held sacred his oath towards the youthful prince.

19. Laid his sword, with gold adorned, the illustrious king between us both: outward its edges were with fire wrought, but with venom drops tempered within."

From this lay, in which the death of Sigurd is related, it appears that he was slain without doors, while some relate that he was slain sleeping in his bed: but the Germans say he was slain out in the forest; and it is told in the "Gudrunarkvida hin Fornar," that Sigurd and the sons of Giuki had ridden to the public assembly (thing) when he was slain. But it is said by all, without exception, that they broke faith with him, and attacked him while lying down and unprepared.

THE FIRST LAY OF GUDRUN.

Gudrun sat over Sigurd dead; she wept not as other women, although ready to burst with sorrow. Both men and women, came to console her, but that was not easy. It is said by some that Gudrun had eaten of Fafnir's heart, and therefore understood the talk of birds. This is also sung of Gudrun:

1. Of old it was that Gudrun prepared to die, when she sorrowing over Sigurd sat. No sigh she uttered, nor with her hands beat, nor wailed, as other women.
2. Jarls came forward of great sagacity, from her sad state of mind to divert her. Gudrun could not shed a tear, such was her affliction; ready she was to burst.
3. Sat there noble wives of jarls, adorned with gold, before Gudrun; each of them told her sorrows, the bitterest she had known.
4. Then said Giaflaug, Giuki's sister: "I know myself to be on earth most joyless: of five consorts I the loss have suffered; of two daughters, sisters three, and brothers eight; I alone live."
5. Gudrun could not shed a tear, such was her affliction for her dead consort, and her soul's anguish for the king's fall.
6. Then said Herborg, Hunaland's queen: "I a more cruel grief have to recount: my seven sons, in the south land, my spouse the eighth, in conflict fell.
7. My father and my mother, my brothers four, on the sea the wind deluded; the waves struck on the ship's timbers.
8. Their last honours 'twas mine to pay, 'twas mine to see them tombed, their funeral rites to prepare was mine. All this I underwent in one half-year, and to me no one consolation offered.
9. Then I became a captive, taken in war, at the close of the same half-year. Then had I to adorn, and tie the shoes, of the Hersir's wife, each morn.
10. From jealousy she threatened me, and with hard blows drove me: nowhere master found I a better, but mistress no where a worse."
11. Gudrun could not shed a tear, such was her affliction for her dead consort, and her soul's anguish for the king's fall.
12. Then said Gullrond, Giuki's daughter: "Little canst thou, my fosterer, wise as thou art, with a young wife fittingly talk." The king's body she forbade to be longer hidden.
13. She snatched the sheet from Sigurd's corpse, and turned his cheek towards his wife's knees: "Behold thy loved one, lay thy mouth to his lip, as if thou wouldst embrace the living prince."
14. Gudrun upon him cast one look: she saw the prince's locks dripping with blood, the chief's sparkling eyes closed in death, his kingly breast cleft by the sword.
15. Then sank down Gudrun back on her pillow, her head-gear was loosed, her cheeks grew red, and a flood of tears fell to her knees.

16. Then wept Gudrun, Giuki's daughter, so that the tears spontaneously flowed, and at the same time screamed the geese in the court, the noble birds, which the lady owned.

17. Then spake Gullrond, Giuki's daughter: "Your loves I know were the most ardent among living beings upon earth: thou hadst delight nowhere, sister mine! save with Sigurd."

18. Then said Gudrun, Giuki's daughter: "Such was my Sigurd among Giuki's sons, as is the garlick out from the grass which grows, or a bright stone on a thread drawn, a precious gem on kings.

19. I also seemed to the prince's warriors higher than any of Herian's Disir; now I am as little as the leaf oft is in the storm-winds, after the chieftain's death.

20. Sitting I miss, and in my bed, my dearest friend. Giuki's sons have caused, Giuki's sons have caused my affliction, and their sister's tears of anguish.

21. So ye desolate the people's land, as ye have kept your sworn oaths. Gunnar! thou wilt not the gold enjoy; those rings will be thy bane, for the oaths thou to Sigurd gavest.

22. Oft in the mansion was the greater mirth, when my Sigurd Grani saddled, and Brynhild they went to woo, that which accursed, in an evil hour!"

23. Then said Brynhild, Budli's daughter: "May the hag lack spouse and children, who thee, Gudrun! has caused to weep, and this morning given thee runes of speech!"

24. Then said Gullrond, Giuki's daughter: "Cease, thou loathed of all! from those words. The evil destiny of princes thou hast ever been; thee every billow drives of an evil nature; thou sore affliction of seven kings, the greatest bane of friendship among women!"

25. Then said Brynhild, Budli's daughter: "Atli my brother, Budli's offspring, is the sole cause of all the evil;

26. When in the hall of the Hunnish folk, with the king we beheld the fire of the serpent's bed. Of that journey, I have paid the penalty, that sight I have ever rued."

27. She by a column stood, the wood violently clasped. From the eyes of Brynhild, Budli's daughter, fire gleamed forth; venom she snorted, when she beheld the wounds of Sigurd.

Gudrun then went away to the forest and deserts, and travelled to Denmark, where she stayed seven half-years with Thora, Hakon's daughter. Brynhild would not outlive Sigurd. She caused her eight thralls and five female slaves to be killed, and then slew herself with a sword, as it is related in the "Sigurdarkvida in Skemma" (the Short Lay of Sigurd).

BRYNHILD'S HEL-RIDE.

After Brynhild's death two piles were made, one for Sigurd, which was the first burnt; but Brynhild was burnt afterwards, and she was in a chariot, which was hung with precious tapestry; so that it was said that Brynhild drove in a chariot on the way to Hel, and passed through a place in which a giantess dwelt. The giantess said:

1. "Thou shalt not pass through my stone-supported dwelling place. Better had it besemed thee to work broidery, than to seek after another's husband.

2. Why dost thou, vagrant woman! from Valland, my dwelling visit? Thou hast, golden dame! if thou desirest to know, gentle one! from thy hands washed human blood."

Brynhild:

3. "Upbraid me not, woman of the rock! although I have in warfare been. Of us, I trow, I shall the better seem, wherever men our conditions know."

Giantess:

4. "Thou, Brynhild! Budli's daughter! wast in evil hour born in the world; thou hast been the bane of Giuki's children, and their happy house subverted."

Brynhild:

5. "From my chariot I will truly tell thee, thou wit less crone! if thou desirest to know, how Giuki's heirs made me both lovelorn and perjured.

6. The bold-hearted king caused the garbs of us eight sisters under an oak to be borne. Twelve years old was I, if thou desirest to know, when to the youthful king oaths I gave.

7. By all in Hlymdalir I was called Hild with the helm, by all who knew me.

8. Then caused I next, in the Gothic realm, the old Hialmgunnar to Hel to journey: I gave victory to the youthful brother of Oda, whereat Odin became hostile to me.

9. He with shields encompassed me, red and white, in Skatalund; their surfaces enclosed me; him he ordained my sleep to break, who in no place could be made to fear.

10. He made around my hall, towards the south, towering burn the destroyer of all wood: then bade that man only over it to ride, who me the gold should bring, that under Fafnir lay.

11. On Grani rode the chief, the gold-disperser, to where my foster-father ruled o'er the dwellings. He alone seemed there to all superior, the Danish warrior, of the court.

12. We slept and were content in the same bed, as if he had my born brother been; neither of us might on the other, for eight nights, lay a hand.

13. Reproached me Gudrun, Giuki's daughter, that I had slept in Sigurd's arms; then was I made aware of what I fain would not,—that they had deceived me, when a mate I took.

14. To calamities all too lasting men and women, ever will be while living born. We two shall now, Sigurd and I pass our life together. Sink thou of giant-kind!"

THE SLAUGHTER OF THE NIFLUNGS.

Gunnar and Hogni then took all the gold, Fafnir's heritage. Disension prevailed afterwards between the Giukungs and Atli. He charged them with being the cause of Brynhild's death. By way of reconciliation, it was agreed that they should give him Gudrun in marriage, to whom they administered an oblivious potion, before she would consent to espouse Atli. Atli had two sons, Erp and Eitil, but Svanhild was the daughter of Sigurd and Gudrun. King Atli invited Gunnar and Hogni to his residence, and sent to them Ving, or Knefrod. Gudrun was aware of treachery, and sent them word in runes not to come; and to Hogni, as a token, she sent the ring Andvaranaut, in which she had tied some wolf's hair. Gunnar had sought the hand of Oddrun, Atli's sister, but did not obtain it. He then married Glaumvor, and Hogni took Kostbera to wife. Their sons were Solar, Snaevor, and Giuki. When the Giukungs came to Atli, Gudrun besought his sons to intercede for their lives, but they would not. The heart of Hogni was cut out, and Gunnar was cast into a pen of serpents. He struck his harp and lulled the serpents, but an adder stung him to the liver.

THE SECOND LAY OF GUDRUN.

King Theodric was with Atli, and had there lost the greater number of his men. Theodric and Gudrun mutually bewailed their afflictions. She related to him and said:

1. A maid above all maids I was; my mother reared me bright in her bower; my brothers I much loved, until me Giuki, with gold adorned, with gold adorned, to Sigurd gave.

2. Such was Sigurd above Giuki's sons, as the green leek is, springing from the grass, or the high-limbed hart above the savage beasts, or gleed-red gold above grey silver.

3. Until my brothers the possession grudged me of a consort to all superior. They could not sleep, nor on affairs deliberate, before they Sigurd had caused to die.

4. Grani to the assembly ran, his tramp was to be heard; but Sigurd then himself came not. All the saddle-beasts were splashed with blood, and with sweating faint, from the murderers.

5. Weeping I went to talk to Grani, with humid cheeks, I prayed the steed to tell: then Grani shuddered, in the grass bowed down his head. The steed knew that his master was no more.

6. Long I wandered, long was my mind distracted, ere of the people's guardian I inquired for my king.

7. Gunnar hung his head, but Hogni told me of Sigurd's cruel death. "Beyond the river slaughtered lies Guthorm's murderer, and to the wolves given.

8. Yonder behold Sigurd, towards the south, there thou wilt hear the ravens croak, the eagles scream, in their feast exulting; the wolves howling round thy consort."

9. "Why wilt thou, Hogni! to a joyless being such miseries recount? May thy heart by ravens be torn and scattered over the wide world, rather than thou shouldst walk with men."

10. Hogni answered, for once cast down, from his cheerful mood by intense trouble: "Gudrun! thou wouldst have greater cause to weep, if the ravens should tear my heart."

11. Alone I turned from that interview to the wolves' scattered leavings. No sigh I uttered, nor with my hands beat, nor wailed, as other women, when I heartbroken sat by Sigurd.

12. Night seemed to me of blackest darkness, when I sorrowing sat by Sigurd. Better by far it seemed to me had the wolves taken my life, or I had been burnt as a birchen tree.

13. From the fell I journeyed five long days and nights, until the lofty hall of Half I recognized. Seven half-years I with Thora stayed, Hakon's daughter, in Denmark.

14. She for my solace wrought in gold southern halls, and Danish swans.

15. We had in pictures the game of warriors, and in handiworks a prince's nobles; red shields, Hunnish heroes, a sworded host, a helmed host, a prince's following.

16. Sigmund's ships from the land sailing, with gilded heads, and carved prows. We on our canvas wrought how Sigar and Siggeir both contended southward in Fyen.

17. When Grimhild, the Gothic woman, heard how greatly I was afflicted, she cast aside her needle-work, and her sons called oft and earnestly, that she might know, who for her son would their sister compensate, or for her consort slain the blood-fine pay?

18. Gunnar was ready gold to offer, for the injuries to atone, and Hogni also. * * * She then inquired who would go the steeds to saddle, the chariot to drive, on horseback ride, the hawk let fly, arrows shoot from the yew bow?

19. Valdar and the Danes with Jarisleif, Eymod the third with Jarizkar, then entered, to princes like. Red mantles had the Langbard's men, corslets ornamented, towering helms; girded they were with falchions, brown were their locks.

20. For me each one would choose precious gifts, precious gifts, and to my heart would speak, if for my many woes they might gain my confidence, and I would in them trust.

21. Grimhild to me brought a potion to drink cold and bitter, that I my injuries might forget; it was mingled with Urd's power, with cold sea-water, and with Son's blood.

22. In that horn were characters of every kind graven and red-hued; nor could I comprehend them: the long lyng-fish of the Haddings' land, an uncut ear of corn: the wild-beasts' entrance.

23. In that potion were many ills together, a herb from every wood, and the acorn, the fire-stead's dew, entrails of offerings, swine's liver seethed; for that deadens strife.

24. And then I forgot, when I had taken it, all the king's words in the hall spoken. There to my feet three kings came, before she herself sought to speak with me.

25. "Gudrun! I will give thee gold to possess, of all the riches much of thy dead father; rings of red gold, Hlodver's halls, all the hangings left by the fallen king.

26. Hunnish maids, those who weave tapestry, and in bright gold work, so that it may delight thee. Over Budli's wealth thou alone shalt rule, adorned with gold, and given to Atli."

27. "I will not have any man, nor Brynhild's brother marry: it besseems me not with Budli's son to increase a race, or life enjoy."

28. "Take care not to pay the chiefs with hate; for 'tis we who have been the aggressors: so shouldst thou act as if yet lived Sigurd and Sigmund, if sons thou bearest."

29. "Grimhild! I cannot in mirth indulge, nor, for my hero's sake, cherish a hope, since the bloodthirsty [wolf and] raven have together cruelly drunk my Sigurd's heart's blood."

30. "Him of all I have found to be a king of noblest race, and in much most excellent: him shalt thou have until age lays thee low, or mateless be, if him thou wilt not take."

31. "Cease to offer that cup of ills so pertinaciously, that race to me: he will Gunnar's destruction perpetrate, and will cut out Hogni's heart. I will not cease until the exulting strife-exciter's life I shall have taken."

32. Weeping Grimhild caught the words, by which to her sons Gudrun foreboded evil, and to her kindred dire misfortunes. "Lands I

will also give thee, people and followers, Vinbiorg and Valbiorg, if thou wilt accept them; for life possess them, and be happy, daughter!"

33. "Him then I will choose among the kings, and from my relatives reluctantly receive him. Never will he be to me a welcome consort, nor my brothers' bale a protection to our sons."

34. Forthwith on horseback was each warrior to be seen; but the Walsh women were in chariots placed. For seven days o'er a cold land we rode; but the second seven, we beat the waves; and the third seven, we reached dry land.

35. There the gate-wards of the lofty burgh the latticed entrance opened, ere the court we entered.

36. Atli waked me, but I seemed to be full of evil thoughts, for my kinsmen's death.

37. "So me just now have the Norns waked,—a grateful interpretation I fain would have. Methought that thou, Gudrun! Giuki's daughter! with a treacherous sword didst pierce me through."

38. "Fire it forebodes, when one of iron dreams, arrogance and pleasure, a woman's anger. Against evil I will go burn thee, cure and medicate thee, although to me thou art hateful."

39. "Seemed to me here in the garden that young shoots had fallen, which I wished to let grow: torn up with their roots, reddened with blood, to table they were brought, and offered me to eat.

40. "Seemed to me that hawks flew from my hand, lacking their quarry, to the house of woes; seemed to me I ate their hearts with honey swollen with blood, with sorrowing mind.

41. "Seemed to me from my hand whelps I let slip; lacking cause of joy, both of them howled: seemed to me their bodies became dead carcasses: of the carrion I was compelled to eat."

42. "There will warriors round thy couch converse, and of the white-locked ones take off the head; death-doomed they are within a few nights, a little ere day: thy court will eat of them."

43. "Lie down I would not, nor sleep after, obstinate in my fate—That I will execute!"

THE THIRD LAY OF GUDRUN.

Atli had a serving-woman named Herkia, who had been his concubine. She informed Atli that she had seen Thiodrek and Gudrun together; whereat Atli was much afflicted. Then Gudrun said:

1. What ails thee ever, Atli! Budli's son! Hast thou sorrow in thy heart? Why never laughest thou? To thy jars it would seem more desirable, that thou with men wouldst talk, and on me wouldst look.

Atli:

2. It grieves me, Gudrun! Giuki's daughter! that in my palace here, Herkia has said, that thou and Thiodrek have under one covering slept, and wantonly been in the linen wrapt.

Gudrun:

3. For all this charge I will give my oaths by the white sacred stone, that with me and Thiodrek nothing has passed, which to man and wife only belongs;

4. Save that I embraced the prince of armies, the honoured king, a single time. Other were our cogitations, when sorrowful we two sat to converse.

5. Hither came Thiodrek, with thirty warriors; now there lives not one of those thirty men. Surround me with thy brothers, and with mailed warriors; surround me with all thy noblest kinsmen.

6. Send to Saxi the Southmen's prince; he can hallow the boiling cauldron."

7. Seven hundred men entered the hall, ere in the cauldron the queen dipt her hand.

8. "Now Gunnar comes not, nor call I Hogni: I shall not see again my loved brothers: with his sword would Hogni such wrong avenge: now I must myself purify from crime."

9. She to the bottom, plunged her snow-white hand, and up she drew the precious stones. "See now, ye men! I am proved guiltless in holy wise, boil the vessel as it may."

10. Laughed then Atli's heart within his breast, when he unscathed beheld the hand of Gudrun. "Now must Herkia to the cauldron go, she who Gudrun had hoped to injure." No one has misery seen who saw not that, how the hand there of Herkia was

burnt. They then the woman led to a foul slough. So were Gudrun's wrongs avenged.

ODDRUN'S LAMENT.

There was a king named Heidrek, who had a daughter named Borgny. Her lover was named Vilmund. She could not give birth to a child until Oddrun, Atli's sister, came. She had been the beloved of Gunnar, Giuki's son. Of this story it is here sung:

1. I have heard tell, in ancient stories how a damsel came to the eastern land: no one was able, on the face of earth, help to afford to Heidrek's daughter.

2. When Oddrun, Atli's sister, heard that the damsel had great pains, from the stall she led her well-bridled steed, and on the swart one the saddle laid.

3. She the horse made run on the smooth, dusty way, until she came to where a high hall stood. She the saddle snatched from the hungry steed, and in she went along the court, and these words first of all uttered:

4. "What is most noteworthy in this country? or what most desirable in the Hunnish land?"

Borgny:

5. Here lies Borgny with pains overwhelmed, thy friend, Oddrun! See if thou canst help her.

Oddrun:

6. What chieftain has on thee brought this dishonour? Why so acute are Borgny's pains?

Borgny:

7. Vilmund is named the falcon-bearer's friend: he the damsel wrapt in a warm coverlet five whole winters, so that from her father she was hidden.

8. They, I ween, spoke not more than this: kindly she went to sit at the damsel's knee. Vehemently sang Oddrun, fervently sang Oddrun songs of power over Borgny.

9. A girl and boy might then tread the mould-way, gentle babes, born of Hogni's bane. Then began to speak the death-sick damsel, who before had no word uttered.

10. "So may thee help the benignant genii, Frigg and Freyia, and other gods besides, as thou hast from me peril removed!"

11. "I was not inclined to give thee help, because thou never wast of succour worthy: I vowed, and have performed what I then said—when the princes the heritage divided, that I would ever help afford."

Borgny:

12. Mad art thou, Oddrun! and hast lost thy wits, when in hostile spirit most of thy words thou utterest; for I have been thy companion upon the earth, as if from brothers we both were born.

Oddrun:

13. I remember yet what thou one evening saidst, when I for Gunnar, a computation made. Such a case, saidst thou, would not thenceforth happen, to any maiden, save to me alone."

14. Then sat down the sorrowing lady to tell her woes, from her great grief:

15. "I was nurtured in the kingly hall, I was the joy of many in the council of men. Life I enjoyed, and my father's wealth, five winters only, while my father lived.

16. These last words the noble-hearted king strove to utter, ere he departed hence.

17. He bade me be endowed with ruddy gold, and in the south be given to Grimhild's son. He said no maiden could more excellent in the world be born, if fate willed it not otherwise.

18. Brynhild in her bower was occupied in broidery: she had people and lands around her. Earth slumbered, and the heavens above, when Fafnir's bane her burgh first saw.

19. Then was conflict waged with the Walish sword, and the burgh taken which Brynhild owned. It was not long—which was not surprising—ere she discovered all those frauds.

20. These she caused cruelly to be avenged, so that we all have great afflictions. Known it will be through every land of men, that she caused herself to die with Sigurd.

21. But I for Gunnar, rings' dispenser, love conceived, such as Brynhild should. But he Brynhild bade a helmet take, said she a Valkyria should become.

22. They forthwith offered ruddy rings to my brother, and indemnity not small. He besides offered for me fifteen vills, and the load of Grani's sides, if he would accept them.

23. But Atli said he never would a marriage-gift receive from Giuki's son. Still we could not our loves withstand, but I my head must lay upon the ring-breaker.

24. Many things said my relations; declared they had surprised us both together; but Atli said, that I would not crime commit, nor scandal perpetrate. But such should no one for another ever deny, when love has part.

25. Atli sent his emissaries about the Murkwood, that he might prove me; and they came to where they ought not to have come, to where we had one couch prepared.

26. To the men we offered red-gold rings, that they it might not to Atli tell; but they forthwith hastened home, and it quickly to Atli told.

27. But they from Gudrun carefully concealed it, yet rather by half she should have known it.

28. A sound was heard of gold-shod hoofs, when into the court rode Giuki's heirs. * * * Of Hogni they the heart cut out, and into a serpent-pen the other cast.

29. I had gone yet once again to Geirmund, to prepare a banquet. * * * The brave king began the harp to sound; for the prince of noble race hoped that I to his aid might come.

30. I it heard from Hlesey, how of trouble there the harp-strings sang.

31. I my thralls bade all be ready: I the prince's life would save. The vessel we let float past the forest, until I saw all Atli's courts.

32. Then came Atli's miserable mother crawling forth:—may she perish!—she Gunnar pierced to the heart; so that the hero I could not save.

33. Oftentimes I wonder, woman gold-adorned! how I after can life retain; for I seemed the formidable sword-dispenser as myself to love:

34. Thou sitst and listenest, while I recount to thee many an evil fate, my own and theirs." Each one lives as he best may. Now is ended *Oddrun's lament*.

THE LAY OF ATLI.

Gudrun, Giuki's daughter, avenged her brothers, as is well known. She first killed Atli's sons, and afterwards Atli himself, and burnt the palace with all the household. On these events was this lay composed.

1. Atli sent riding a messenger to Gunnar, a crafty man, Knefrud was his name. To Giuki's courts he came, and to Gunnar's hall, to the seats of state, and the glad potation:

2. There drank the courtiers wine in their Valhall—but the guileful ones silence kept—the Huns' wrath they feared. Then said Knefrud, with chilling voice:—the southern warrior on a high bench sat—

3. "Atli has sent me hither on his errand riding on a bit-gripping steed, through the unknown Murkwood, to pray you, Gunnar! that to his bench ye come, with helms of state, Atli's home to visit.

4. "Shields ye there can choose, and smooth-shaven spears, gold-red helms, and of Huns a multitude, silver-gilt saddle-cloths, sarks gory-red, the dart's obstruction, and bit-gripping steeds.

5. "The plain he will also give you, the broad Gnita heid, whistling javelins, and gilded prowls, vast treasures, and Danp's towns, with that famed forest, which men the Murkwood call."

6. Gunnar his head then turned, and to Hogni said: "What counselest thou, bold warrior? now suchlike we hear? Of no gold I knew on Gnita's heath, to which we possess not other equal.

7. "Seven halls have we filled with swords, of each of which the hilt is gold. My horse I know the best, and my sword the keenest; my bow adorns my seat, my corslets are of gold, my helm and shield the brightest, brought from the hall of Kiar: mine alone are better than all the Hunnish ones.

8. "What thinkest thou the woman means, by sending us a ring in a wolf's clothing wrapt? I think that she caution enjoins. Wolf's hair I found twined in the red-gold ring: wolfish is the way we on our errand ride."

9. No sons persuaded Gunnar, nor other kinsman, interpreters nor counsellors, nor those who potent were. Then spake Gunnar, as becomed a king, great in his mead-hall, from his large soul:

10. "Rise now up, Fiornir! let along the benches pass the golden cups of heroes, from the attendants' hands.

11. "The wolf shall rule the Niflungs' heritage, O bearded sages! if Gunnar perish; black-coated bears earth's fruit tear with their teeth, to the dogs' delight, if Gunnar come not back."

12. Honoured men, weeping led the land's ruler from the Huns' court. Then said Hogni's youthful heir: "Go now, prudent and prosperous, whither your wishes lead."

13. The warriors made their bit-gripping steeds over the mountains fly, through the unknown Murkwood. The whole Hunnish forest trembled where'er the warriors rode; over the shrubless, all-green plains they sped.

14. Atli's land they saw, and the high watch-towers; Bikki's people stood on that lofty fortress; the south people's hall was round with benches set, with well-bound bucklers, and white shields, the javelin's obstruction. There Atli drank wine in his Valhall: his guards sat without, Gunnar and his men to watch, lest they there should come with yelling dart, to excite their prince to conflict.

15. Their sister forthwith saw, when the hall they had entered, her brothers both—beer had she little drunken—"Betrayed art thou now, Gunnar! though strong, how wilt thou contend with the Huns' deadly wives? Go quickly from this hall!

16. "Better hadst thou, Gunnar! in corslet come, than with helm of state, to see the home of Atli; thou in the saddle wouldst have sat whole sun-bright days, and o'er the pallid dead let the Norns weep, the Hunnish shield-maids misery suffer; but Atli himself thou shouldst into the serpent-pen have cast; but now the serpent-pen is for you two reserved."

17. "Sister! 'tis now too late the Niflungs to assemble, long 'tis to seek the aid of men, of valiant heroes, over the rugged fells of Rhine."

18. Then the Burgundians' friends Gunnar seized, in fetters laid, and him fast bound.

19. Hogni hewed down seven, with the keen sword, but the eighth he thrust into the raging fire. So should a valiant man defend himself from foes.

20. Hogni had Gunnar's hands protected. The bold chief they asked, if the Goths' lord would with gold his life redeem?

21. "Hogni's heart in my hand shall lie, cut bloody from the breast of the valiant chief, the king's son, with a dull-edged knife." * * * They the heart cut out from Hialli's breast; on a dish bleeding laid it, and it to Gunnar bare.

23. Then said Gunnar, lord of men: "Here have I the heart of the timid Hialli, unlike the heart of the bold Hogni; for much it trembles as in the dish it lies: it trembled more by half, while in his breast it lay."

24. Hogni laughed, when to his heart they cut the living crest-crasher; no lament uttered he. All bleeding on a dish they laid it, and it to Gunnar bare.

25. Calmly said Gunnar, the warrior Niflung: "Here have I the heart of the bold Hogni, unlike the heart of the timid Hialli; for it little trembles, as in the dish it lies: it trembled less, while in his breast it lay.

26. "So far shalt thou, Atli! be from the eyes of men as thou wilt from the treasures be. In my power alone is all the hidden Niflungs' gold, now that Hogni lives not.

27. "Ever was I wavering, while we both lived; now am I so no longer, as I alone survive. Rhine shall possess men's baleful metal, the mighty stream, the As-known Niflungs' heritage. In the rolling water the choice rings shall glitter, rather than on the hands of the Huns' children shine.

28. "Drive your wheel-chariots, the captive is now in bonds."

29. Atli the mighty, their sister's husband, rode with resounding steeds, with strife-thorns surrounded. Gudrun perceived the heroes' peril, she from tears refrained, on entering the hall of tumult.

30. "So be it with thee, Atli! as towards Gunnar thou hast held the oft-sworn oaths, formerly taken—by the southward verging sun, and by Sigty's hill, the secluded bed of rest, and by Ullr's ring." Yet

thence the more did the bit-shaker the treasure's guardian, the warrior chief, drag to death.

31. The living prince then did a host of men into a pen cast down, which was within with serpents over-crawled. But Gunnar there alone a harp in wrathful mood with his hand struck: the strings resounded. So should a daring chief, a ring-dispenser, gold from men withhold.

32. Atli turned his brass-shod steed, his home to revisit, back from the murder. Din was in the court with horses thronged, men's weapon-song, from the heath they were come.

33. Out then went Gudrun, Atli to meet, with a golden cup to do her duty to the king. "Thou canst, O King! joyful in thy hall receive from Gudrun the arms of the departed."

34. The drinking-cups of Atli groaned with wine heavy, when in the hall together the Huns were counted. Long-bearded, bold, the warriors entered.

35. Hastened the bright-faced dame to bear their potions to them, the wondrous lady to the chiefs; and reluctantly to the pallid Atli the festal dainties offered, and uttered words of hate.

36. "Thou, swords' dispenser! hast thy two sons' hearts, slaughter-gory, with honey eaten. I resolved that thou, bold chief! shouldst of a human dish eat at thy feasting, and to the place of honour send it. Henceforth thou wilt not to thy knees call Erp and Eitil, joyous with beer the two: thou wilt not henceforth, see them from thy middle seat, gold-dispersing, javelins shafting, manes clipping, or horses urging."

38. Uproar was on the benches, portentous the cry of men, noise beneath the costly hangings. The children of the Huns wept, all wept save Gudrun, who never wept, or for her bear-fierce brothers, or her dear sons, young, simple, whom she had borne to Atli.

39. Gold scattered the swan-fair dame; with ruddy rings the household gifted. Fate she let ripen, but the bright gold flow. The woman spared not the treasure-houses.

40. Atli incautious had himself drunk weary; weapon he had none, nor was 'gainst Gudrun guarded. Oft had their sport been better, when they lovingly embraced each other before the nobles.

41. With the sword's point she gave the bed of blood to drink with death-bent hand, and the dogs loosed, out at the hall-door drove them, and the lady wakened the household with burning brand. That vengeance she for her brothers took.

42. To fire she then gave all that were therein, and from her brothers' murder were from the dark den returned. The old structures fell, the treasure-houses smoked, the Budlungs' dwelling. Burnt too were the shield-maids within, their lives cut short; in the raging fire they sank.

43. Of this enough is said. No such woman will henceforth arms again bear, to avenge her brothers. That bright woman had to three kings of men the death-doom borne, before she died.

Yet more clearly is this told in "Atlalalum inum Groenlenzkum" (the Groenland lay of Atli).

THE GROENLAND LAY OF ATLI.

1. Of those misdeeds men have heard tell, when warriors of old a compact made, which by pledges they confirmed, a secret consultation held: terrible it was to them after, and to Giuki's sons likewise, who were betrayed.

2. The warriors' fate ripened, they were death-doomed: ill advised was Atli, though he possessed sagacity: he felled a mighty column, strove hardly against himself; with speed he messengers despatched, that his wife's brothers should come quickly.

3. Wise was the house-dame, prudently she thought; the words in order she had heard, that in secret they had said: the sage lady was at a loss: fain would she help them; they o'er the sea must sail, but she herself could not go.

4. Runes she graved, Vingí them falsified, before he gave them from him; of ill he was the bearer. Then departed Atli's messengers, through the branched fir, for where the bold warriors dwelt.

5. They with beer were cheered, and fires they kindled, naught thought they of guile, when they were come; they the gifts accepted, which the prince sent them, on a column hung them, and of no evil thought.

6. Then came Kostbera, she was Hogni's wife, a woman greatly cautious, and them both greeted. Glad was also Glaumvor, Gunnar's consort, the prudent dame her duty forgot not, she to the guests' need attended.

7. Hogni they home invited, if he would be pleased to go. Treachery was manifest, had they but reflected! Gunnar then promised, if only Hogni would, but Hogni refused what the other proposed.

8. The noble dames bore mead, of many things there was abundance, many horns passed round, until it seemed they had full drunken.

9. The household prepared their couches, as to them seemed best. Cunning was Kostbera, she could runes interpret; she the letters read by the bright fire;—her tongue she had to guard between both her gums—so perverted were they, it was difficult to understand them.

10. To their bed they went, she and Hogni. The gentle lady dreamed, and concealed it not, to the prince wisely said it as soon as she awoke.

11. "From home thou art going, Hogni! give ear to counsel; few are fully prudent: go another time.

12. I have the runes interpreted, which thy sister graved: that fair dame has not this time invited thee. At one thing I wonder most, I cannot even conceive, why so wise a woman so confusedly should grave; for it is so set down as if it intimated death to you both, if you should straightway come. Either she has left out a letter, or others are the cause."

13. "They are," said Hogni, "all suspicious; I have no knowledge of them, nor will I into it inquire, unless we have to make requital. The king will gift us with gleed-red gold. I never fear, though we may hear of terror."

14. "Tottering ye will go, if thitherward ye tend. No kind entertainment there will ye at this time find. Hogni! I have dreamed, I will not conceal it: in an evil hour ye will go, or so at least I fear.

15. "Methought thy coverlet was with fire consumed; that the towering flame rushed through my dwelling."

Hogni:

16. "Here lie linen cloths, which thou hadst little noticed: these will quickly burn where thou the coverlet sawest."

Kostbera:

17. "Methought a bear came in, and broke down the columns; and so his talons shook, that we were terror-stricken; by his mouth held many of us, so that we were helpless: there, too, was a din far from little."

Hogni:

18. "A tempest there will be furious and sudden: the white bear thou sawest will be a storm from the east."

Kostbera:

19. "Methought an eagle flew herein, all through the house: that will largely concern us. He sprinkled all with blood: from his threats I thought it to be the 'ham' of Atli."

Hogni:

20. "We often slaughter largely, and then red we see: often are oxen meant, when we of eagles dream. Sound is the heart of Atli, dream thou as thou mayest." With this they ended: all speeches have an end.

21. The high-born awoke, there the like befell: Glaumvor had perceived that her dreams were ill-boding, adverse to Gunnar's going to and fro.

22. "Methought a gallows was for thee erected, thou wentest to be hanged, that serpents ate thee, that I inter'd thee living, that the Powers' dissolution came—Divine thou what that portends.

23. "Methought a bloody glove from thy sark was drawn—ill 'tis such a dream to a consort to recount—methought a lance was thrust through thy middle: wolves howled on every side."

Gunnar:

24. "Where dogs run they are wont to bark: oft bodes the bay of dogs the flight of javelins."

Glaumvor:

25. "Methought a river ran herein, through the whole house, that it roared violently, rushed o'er the benches, brake the feet of you brothers twain; nothing the water spared: something will that portend!

26. "Methought dead women in the night came hither; not ill-clad were they: they would choose thee, forthwith invited thee to their seats. I ween thy Disir have forsaken thee."

Gunnar:

27. "Too late it is to speak, it is now so resolved; from the journey we shall not shrink, as it is decreed to go: very probable it seems that our lives will be short."

28. When colours were discernible, those on journey bent all rose up: the others fain would stay them. The five journeyed together, of "hus-carls" there were present twice that number—it was ill devised—Snævar and Solar, they were Hogni's sons; Orkning he was named, who them accompanied, a gentle shield-bearer was he, the brother of Hogni's wife.

29. They went fair-appointed, until the firth them parted: ever would their wives have stayed them, they would not be stayed.

30. Glaumvor then spake, Gunnar's consort, Vingi she addressed, as to her seemed fitting: "I know not whether ye will requite us as we would: with treachery came the guest, if aught of ill betide."

31. Then Vingi swore, little spared he himself: "May him the Jotuns have, if towards you he lies! the gallows hold him, if aught against peace he meditates!"

32. Bera took up the word, she of gentle soul: "Sail ye prosperous, and may success attend you: may it be as I pray, and if nothing hinder!"

33. Hogni answered—he to his kin meant well—"Be of good cheer, ye prudent! whatever may befall. Many say the same, though with great difference; for many little care how they depart from home."

34. On each other then they looked before they parted: then, I ween, their fates were severed, and their ways divided.

35. Vigorously they rowed, their bark was well nigh riven; backward bending the waves they beat, ardently plied: their oar-bands were broken, the rowlocks shattered. They made not the vessel fast before they quitted it.

36. A little after—I will the end relate—they saw the mansion stand that Budli had possessed. Loud creaked the latticed gates, when Hogni knocked.

37. Then said Vingi, what he had better not, "Go far from the house, 'tis perilous to enter; I quickly enticed you to perdition; ye shall forthwith be slain. With fair words I prayed your coming, though guile was under them. But just bide here, while a gallows I prepare."

38. Hogni answered—little thought he of yielding, or of aught fearful that was to be proved—"Think not to frighten us: try that seldom. If one word thou addest, thou wilt thy harm prolong."

39. They rushed on Vingi, and struck him dead, laid on their axes, while life within him throbbed.

40. Atli his men assembled, in their byrnies they issued forth, went prepared so that a fence was between them. Words they banded, all with rage boiling: "Already had we resolved to take your lives away."

Hogni:

41. "It looks but ill, if ye before have counselled: e'en now ye are unprepared, and we one have felled, smitten to death: one of your host was he."

42. Furious they became, when those words they heard; their fingers they stretched forth, and their bowstrings seized; sharply shot, and with shields themselves protected.

43. In then came the tale of what without was passing; loud before the hall they a thrall heard speak.

44. Then incensed was Gudrun, when the sad news she heard: adorned with necklaces, she tore them all asunder; so hurled the silver, that the rings in shivers flew.

45. Then she went out, not gently moved the doors; went forth, void of fear, and the comers hailed, turned to the Niflungs: that was her last greeting, truth attended it; more words she said:

46. "I sought by symbols to prevent your leaving home,—fate may no one resist—and yet must you come hither." Wisely she asked: might they not be appeased? No one consented, all answered no.

47. Saw then the high-born lady that a hard game they played; a deadly deed she meditated, and her robe dashed aside, a naked falchion seized, and her kinsmen's lives defended: skilful she was in warfare, where her hand she applied.

48. Giuki's daughter caused two warriors to fall; Atli's brother she struck down,—he must henceforth be borne—so she the conflict managed, that she his foot struck off. Another too she smote, so that he never rose, to Hel she sent him: her hand trembled not.

49. A conflict then ensued, which was widely famed, but that excelled all else which Giuki's sons performed. So 'tis said the Niflungs, while yet they lived, with swords maintained the fight, corslets rent, helmets hewed, as their hearts prompted.

50. At morning most they fought, until mid-day had passed; all early morn, and the forenoon, ere the fight was ended, the field flowed with blood, until eighteen had fallen: Bera's two sons, and her brother, had them overcome.

51. Then the fierce Atli spoke, wroth though he was: "Tis ill to look around; this is long of you. We were thirty warlike thanes, eleven survive: the chasm is too great. We were five brothers, when Budli died; now has Hel the half, two lie slain.

52. "A great affinity I obtained, that I cannot deny, pernicious woman! of which I have no benefit: peace we have seldom had, since thou among us camest. Of kinsmen ye have bereft me, of riches often wronged. To Hel my sister ye have sent; that is to me most bitter."

Gudrun:

53. "This thou callest to mind, Atli! but thou so first didst act: my mother thou didst take, and for her treasures murder; my gifted niece with hunger thou didst cause to perish. Laughable to me it seems, when thou sorrows dost recount. The gods are to be thanked, that it goes ill with thee."

Atli:

54. Jarls! I exhort you the sorrow to augment of that presumptuous woman: I would fain see it. Strive so to do, that Gudrun may lament. Might I but see that in her lot she joys not!

55. Take ye Hogni, and with a knife hack him: cut out his heart: this ye shall do. Gunnar the fierce of soul to a gallows fasten; do the work thoroughly, lure up the serpents.

Hogni:

56. Do as thou listest, glad I will await it; stout I shall prove myself: I have ere now things much harder proved. Ye had a hindrance while unscathed we were: now are we so wounded that our fate thou mayest command.

57. Beiti spake,—he was Atli's steward—Take we Hialli, but Hogni let us save. Let us do half the work; he is death-worthy. As long as he lives a slug he will ever be.

58. Terrified was the kettle-watcher, the place no longer held him: he could be a whiner, he clomb into every nook: their conflict was his bane, as he the penalty must pay; and the day sad, when he must from the swine die, from all good things, which he had enjoyed.

59. Budli's cook they took, and the knife brought towards him. Howled the wretched thrall, ere the point he felt; declared that he had time the gardens to manure, the vilest offices to do, if from death he might escape. Joyful indeed was Hialli, could he but save his life.

60. Hogni all this observed—few so act, as for a slave to intercede, that he may escape!—"Less 'tis, I say, for me to play this game myself. Why shall we here desire to listen to that screaming?"

61. Hands on the good prince they laid. Then was no option for the bold warriors, the sentence longer to delay. Then laughed Hogni; heard the sons of day how he could hold out: torment he well endured!

62. A harp Gunnar took, with his foot-branches touched it. He could so strike it, that women wept, and the men sobbed, who best could hear it. He the noble queen counselled: the rafters burst asunder.

63. There died the noble, as the dawn of day; at the last they caused their deeds to live.

64. Atli thought himself great: over them both he strode, to the sagacious woman told the evil, and bitterly reproached her. "It is now morning, Gudrun! thy loved ones thou hast lost; partly thou art the cause that it has so befallen."

Gudrun:

65. Joyful art thou, Atli! slaughter to announce: repentance shall await thee, when thou hast all proved. That heritage shall be left

thee—that I can tell thee—that ill shall never from thee go, unless I also die.

Atli:

66. That I can prevent; another course I see, easier by half: the good we oft reject. With slaves I will console thee, with things most precious, with snow-white silver, as thou thyself mayest desire.

Gudrun:

67. Of that there is *no* hope; I will all reject; atonement I have spurned for smaller injuries. Hard I was ever thought, now will that be aggravated. I every grudge concealed, while Hogni lived.

68. We were both nurtured in one house; many a play we played, and in the wood grew up; Grimhild us adorned with gold and necklaces; for my brothers' death never wilt thou indemnify me, nor ever do what shall to me seem good.

69. Men's too great power women's lot oppresses; on the knee the hand sinks, if the arms wither; the tree inclines, if its root-fibres are severed. Now, Atli! thou mayest alone over all here command.

70. Most unwise it was, when to this the prince gave credit: the guile was manifest, had he been on his guard. Dissembling then was Gudrun, against her heart she could speak, made herself gay appear, with two shields she played.

71. A banquet she would prepare, her brothers' funeral feast; the same would Atli also for his own do.

72. With this they ended; the banquet was prepared; the feasting was too luxurious. The woman great of heart was stern, she warred on Budli's race; on her spouse she would cruel vengeance wreak.

73. The young ones she enticed, and on a block laid them, the fierce babes were terrified, and wept not, to their mother's bosom crept, asked what she was going to do.

74. "Ask no questions, both I intend to kill; long have I desired to cut short your days."

75. "Slay as thou wilt thy children, no one hinders it; thy rage will have short peace, if thou destroyest us in our blooming years, thou desperate woman!" It fell out accordingly: she cut the throats of both.

76. Atli oft inquired whither his boys were gone to play, as he nowhere saw them?

Gudrun:

77. Over I am resolved to go, and to Atli tell it. Grimhild's daughter will not conceal it from thee. Little glad, Atli! wilt thou be, when all thou learnest; great woe didst thou raise up, when thou my brother slewest.

78. Very seldom have I slept since they fell. Bitterly I threatened thee: now I have reminded thee. "It is now morning," saidst thou: I yet it well remember; and it now is eve, when thou the like shalt learn.

79. Thou thy sons hast lost, as thou least shouldest; know that their skulls thou hast had for beer-cups; thy drink I prepared, I their red blood have shed.

80. I their hearts took, and on a spit staked them, then to thee gave them. I said they were of calves,—it was long of thee alone—thou didst leave none, voraciously didst devour, well didst ply thy teeth.

81. Thy children's fate thou knowest, few a worse awaits. I have my part performed, though in it glory not.

Atli:

82. Cruel wast thou, Gudrun! who couldst so act, with thy children's blood my drink to mingle. Thou hast destroyed thy offspring, as thou least shouldest; and to myself thou leavest a short interval from ill.

Gudrun:

83. I could still desire thyself to slay; rarely too ill it fares with such a prince. Thou hast already perpetrated crimes unexampled among men of frantic cruelty, in this world: now thou hast added what we have just witnessed. A great misdeed hast thou committed, thy death-feast thou hast prepared.

Atli:

84. On the pile thou shalt be burnt, but first be stoned; then wilt thou have earned what thou hast ever sought.

Gudrun:

85. Tell to thyself such griefs early to-morrow: by a fairer death I will pass to another light.

86. In the same hall they sat, exchanged hostile thoughts, bandied words of hate: each was ill at ease.

87. Hate waxed in a Hniflung, a great deed he meditated; to Gudrun he declared that he was Atli's deadly foe.

88. Into her mind came Hogni's treatment; happy she him accounted, if he vengeance wreaked. Then was Atli slain, within a little space; Hogni's son him slew, and Gudrun herself.

89. The bold king spake, roused up from sleep; quickly he felt the wounds, said he no binding needed. "Tell me most truly who has slain Budli's son. I am hardly treated: of life I have no hope."

Gudrun:

90. I, Grimhild's daughter, will not from thee hide, that I am the cause that thy life passes away; but partly Hogni's son, that thy wounds make thee faint.

Atli:

91. To the slaughter thou hast rushed, although it ill beseemed thee; 'tis bad to circumvent a friend, who well confided in thee. Besought I went from home, to woo thee, Gudrun!

92. A widow thou was left, fierce thou wast accounted, which was no falsehood, as we have proved. Hither home thou earnest, us a host of men attended; all was splendid on our journey.

93. Pomp of all kinds was there, of illustrious men, beeves in abundance: largely we enjoyed them. Of all things there was plenty partaken of by many.

94. A marriage gift to my bride I gave, treasures for her acceptance, thralls thrice ten, seven fair female slaves: in such things was honour; silver there was yet more.

95. All seemed to thee as it were naught, while the lands untouched lay, which Budli had left me. So didst thou undermine, dost allow me nothing to receive. Thou didst my mother let often sit weeping: with heart content I found not one of my household after.

Gudrun:

96. Now, Atli! thou liest, though of that I little reck. Gentle I seldom was, yet didst thou greatly aggravate it. Young brothers ye fought together, among yourselves contended; to Hel went the half from thy house: all went to ruin that should be for benefit.

97. Brothers and sisters we were three, we thought ourselves invincible: from the land we departed, we followed Sigurd. We roved about, each steered a ship; seeking luck we went, till to the east we came.

98. The chief king we slew, there a land obtained, the "her-sar" yielded to us; that manifested fear. We from the forest freed him whom we wished harmless, raised him to prosperity who nothing had possessed.

99. The Hun king died, then suddenly my fortune changed: great was the young wife's grief, the widow's lot was hers. A torment to me it seemed to come living to the house of Atli. A hero had possessed me: sad was that loss!

100. Thou didst never from a contest come, as we had heard, where thou didst gain thy cause, or others overcome; ever wouldst thou give way, and never stand, lettest all pass off quietly, as ill beseemed a king.

Atli:

101. Gudrun! now thou liest. Little will be bettered the lot of either: we have all suffered. Now act thou, Gudrun! of thy goodness, and for our honour, when I forth am borne.

Gudrun:

102. I a ship will buy, and a painted cist; will the winding-sheet well wax, to enwrap thy corpse; will think of every requisite, as if we had each other loved.

103. Atli was now a corpse, lament from his kin arose: the illustrious woman did all she had promised. The wise woman would go to destroy herself; her days were lengthened: she died another time.

104. Happy is every one hereafter who shall give birth to such a daughter famed for deeds, as Giuki begat: ever will live, in every land, their oft-told tale, wherever people shall give ear.

GUDRUN'S INCITEMENT.

Having slain Atli, Gudrun went to the sea-shore. She went out into the sea, and would destroy herself, but could not sink. She was borne across the firth to the land of King Jonakr, who married her. Their sons were Sorli, Erp, and Hamdir. There was reared up Svanhild, the daughter of Sigurd. She was given in marriage to Jormunrek the Powerful. With him lived Bikki, who counselled Randver, the king's son, to take her. Bikki told that to the king, who caused Randver to be hanged, and Svanhild trodden under horses' feet. When Gudrun heard of this she said to her sons:—

1. Then heard I tell of quarrels dire, hard sayings uttered from great affliction, when her sons the fierce-hearted Gudrun, in deadly words, to slaughter instigated.

2. "Why sit ye here? why sleep life away? why does it pain you not joyous words to speak, now Jormunrek your sister young in years has with horses trodden, white and black, in the public way, with grey and way-wont Gothic steeds?"

3. Ye are not like to Gunnar and the others, nor of soul so valiant as Hogni was. Her ye should seek to avenge, if ye had the courage of my brothers, or the fierce spirit of the Hunnish kings."

4. Then said Hamdir, the great of heart: "Little didst thou care Hogni's deed to praise, when Sigurd he from sleep awaked. Thy blue-white bed-clothes were red with thy husband's gore, with death-blood covered.

5. "For thy brothers thou didst o'er-hasty vengeance take, dire and bitter, when thou thy sons didst murder. We young ones could on Jormunrek, acting all together, have avenged our sister.

6. "Bring forth the arms of the Hunnish kings: thou hast us stimulated to a sword-mote."

7. Laughing Gudrun to the storehouse turned, the kings' crested helms from the coffers drew, their ample corslets, and to her sons them bore. The young heroes loaded their horses' shoulders.

8. Then said Hamdir, the great of heart: "So will no more come his mother to see, the warrior felled in the Gothic land, so that thou the funeral-beer after us all may drink, after Svanhild and thy sons."

9. Weeping Gudrun, Giuki's daughter, sorrowing went, to sit in the fore-court, and to recount, with tear-worn cheeks, sad of soul, her calamities, in many ways.

10. "Three fires I have known, three hearths I have known, of three consorts I have been borne to the house. Sigurd alone to me was better than all, of whom my brothers were the murderers.

11. "Of my painful wounds I might not complain; yet they even more seemed to afflict me, when those chieftains to Atli gave me.

12. "My bright boys I called to speak with me; for my injuries I could not get revenge, ere I had severed the Hniflungs' heads.

13. "To the sea-shore I went, against the Norns I was embittered; I would cast off their persecution; bore, and submerged me not the towering billows; up on land I rose, because I was to live.

14. "To the nuptial couch I went—as I thought better for me,—for the third time, with a mighty king. I brought forth offspring, guardians of the heritage, guardians of the heritage, Jonakr's sons.

15. "But around Svanhild bond-maidens sat; of all my children her I loved the best. Svanhild was, in my hall, as was the sun-beam, fair to behold.

16. "I with gold adorned her, and with fine raiment, before I gave her to the Gothic people. That is to me the hardest of all my woes, that Svanhild's beauteous locks should in the mire be trodden under horses' feet.

17. "But that was yet more painful, when my Sigurd they ingloriously slew in his bed; though of all most cruel, when of Gunnar the glistening serpents to the vitals crawled; but the most agonizing, which to my heart flew, when the brave king's heart they while quick cut out.

18. "Many griefs I call to memory, many ills I call to memory. Guide, Sigurd! thy black steed, thy swift courser, hither let it run. Here sits no son's wife, no daughter, who to Gudrun precious things may give.

19. "Remember, Sigurd! what we together said, when on our bed we both were sitting, that thou, brave one, wouldst come to me from Hel's abode, but I from the world to thee.

20. "Raise, ye Jarls! an oaken pile; let it under heaven the highest be. May it burn a breast full of woes! the fire round my heart its sorrows melt!"

21. May all men's lot be bettered, all women's sorrow lessened, to whom this tale of woes shall be recounted.

THE LAY OF HAMDIR.

1. In that court arose woeful deeds, at the Alfar's doleful lament; at early morn, men's afflictions, troubles of various kinds; sorrows were quickened.

2. It was not now, nor yesterday, a long time since has passed away,—few things are more ancient, it was by much earlier—when Gudrun, Giuki's daughter, her young sons instigated Svanhild to avenge.

3. "She was your sister, her name Svanhild, she whom Jormunrek with horses trod to death, white and black, on the public way, with grey and way-wont Gothic steeds.

4. "Thenceforth all is sad to you, kings of people! Ye alone survive, 5. "Branches of my race. Lonely I am become, as the asp-tree in the forest, of kindred bereft, as the fir of branches; of joy deprived, as is the tree of foliage, when the branch-spoiler comes in the warm day."

6. Then spake Hamdir, the great of soul. "Little, Gudrun! didst thou care Hogni's deed to praise, when Sigurd they from sleep awaked on the bed thou satst, and the murderers laughed.

7. "Thy bed-clothes, blue and white, woven by cunning hands, swam in thy husband's gore. When Sigurd perished, o'er the dead thou satst, caredst not for mirth—so Gunnar willed it.

8. "Atli thou wouldst afflict by Erp's murder, and by Eitil's life's destruction: that proved for thyself the worse: therefore should every one so against others use, for life's destruction, a sharp-biting sword, that he harm not himself."

9. Then said Sorli—he had a prudent mind—"I with my mother will not speeches exchange: though words to each of you to me seem wanting. What, Gudrun! dost thou desire, which for tears thou canst not utter?

10. "For thy brothers weep, and thy dear sons, thy nearest kin, drawn to the strife: for us both shalt thou, Gudrun! also have to weep, who here sit fated on our steeds, far away to die."

11. From the court they went, for conflict ready. The young men journeyed over humid fells, on Hunnish steeds, murder to avenge.

12. Then said Erp, all at once—the noble youth was joking on his horse's back—"Ill 'tis to a timid man to point out the ways." They said the bastard was over bold.

13. On their way they had found the wily jester. "How will the swarthy dwarf afford us aid?"

14. He of another mother answered: so he said aid he would to his kin afford, as one foot to the other [or, grown to the body, one hand the other].

15. "What can a foot to a foot give; or, grown to the body, one hand the other?"

16. From the sheath they drew the iron blade, the falchion's edges, for Hel's delight. They their strength diminished by a third part, they their young kinsman caused to earth to sink.

17. Their mantles then they shook, their weapons grasped; the high-born were clad in sumptuous raiment.

18. Forward lay the ways, a woeful path they found, and their sister's son wounded on a gibbet, wind-cold outlaw-trees, on the town's west. Ever vibrated the ravens' whet: there to tarry was not good.

19. Uproar was in the hall, men were with drink excited, so that the horses' tramp no one heard, until a mindful man winded his horn.

20. To announce they went to Jormunrek that were seen helmed warriors. "Take ye counsel, potent ones are come; before mighty men ye have on a damsel trampled."

21. Then laughed Jormunrek, with his hand stroked his beard, asked not for his corslet; with wine he struggled, shook his dark locks, on his white shield looked, and in his hand swung the golden cup.

22. "Happy should I seem, if I could see Hamdir and Sorli within my hall. I would them then with bowstrings bind, the good sons of Giuki on the gallows hang."

23. Then said Hrodræglod, on the high steps standing; "Prince" said she to her son—for that was threatened which ought not to happen—"shall two men alone bind or slay ten hundred Goths in this lofty burgh?"

24. Tumult was in the mansion, the beer-cups flew in shivers, men lay in blood from the Goths' breasts flowing.

25. Then said Hamdir, the great of heart: "Jormunrek! thou didst desire our coming, brothers of one mother, into thy burgh: now seest thou thy feet, seest thy hands Jormunrek! cast into the glowing fire."

26. Then roared forth a godlike mail-clad warrior, as a bear roars: "On the men hurl stones, since spears bite not, nor edge of sword, nor point, the sons of Jonakr."

27. Then said Hamdir, the great of heart: "Harm didst thou, brother! when thou that mouth didst ope. Oft from that mouth bad counsel comes."

28. "Courage hast thou, Hamdir! if only thou hadst sense: that man lacks much who wisdom lacks.

29. "Off would the head now be, had but Erp lived, our brother bold in fight, whom on the way we slew, that warrior brave—the Disir instigated—that man sacred to us, whom we resolved to slay.

30. "I ween not that ours should be the wolves' example, that with ourselves we should contend, like the Norns' dogs, that voracious are in the desert nurtured."

31. "Well have we fought, on slaughtered Goths we stand, on those fallen by the sword, like eagles on a branch. Great glory we have gained, though now or to-morrow we shall die. No one lives till eve against the Norns' decree."

33. There fell Sorli, at the mansion's front; but Hamdir sank at the house's back.

This is called the Old Lay of Hamdir.

Snorri Sturluson: Younger Edda

GEEFJON'S PLOUGHING.

1. King Gylfi ruled over the land which is now called Svithiod (Sweden). It is related of him that he once gave a wayfaring woman, as a recompense for her having diverted him, as much land in his realm as she could plough with four oxen in a day and a night. This woman was, however, of the race of the Æsir, and was called Gefjon. She took four oxen from the north, out of Jotunheim (but they were the sons she had had with a giant), and set them before a plough. Now the plough made such deep furrows that it tore up the land, which the oxen drew westward out to sea until they came to a sound. There Gefjon fixed the land, and called it Sælund. And the place where the land had stood became water, and formed a lake which is now called "The Water" (Laugur), and the inlets of this lake correspond exactly with the headlands of Sealund. As Skald Bragi the Old saith:—

Gefjon drew from Gylfi,
Rich in stored up treasure,
The land she joined to Denmark.
Four heads and eight eyes bearing,
While hot sweat trickled down them,
The oxen dragged the reef mass
That formed this winsome island.

GYLFI'S JOURNEY TO ASGARD.

2. King Gylfi was renowned for his wisdom and skill in magic. He beheld with astonishment that whatever the Æsir willed took place; and was at a loss whether to attribute their success to the superiority of their natural abilities, or to a power imparted to them by the mighty gods whom they worshipped. To be satisfied in this particular, he resolved to go to Asgard, and, taking upon himself the likeness of an old man, set out on his journey. But the Æsir, being too well skilled in divination not to foresee his design, prepared to receive him with various illusions. On entering the city Gylfi saw a very lofty mansion, the roof of which, as far as his eye could reach, was covered with golden shields. Thiodolf of Hvina thus alludes to Valhalla being roofed with shields.

Warriors all care-worn,
(Stones had poured upon them),
On their backs let glisten
Valhalla's golden shingles.

At the entrance of the mansion Gylfi saw a man who amused himself by tossing seven small-swords in the air, and catching them as they fell, one after the other. This person having asked his name, Gylfi said that he was called Gangler, and that he came from a long journey, and begged for a night's lodging. He asked, in his turn, to whom this mansion belonged. The other told him that it belonged to their king, and added, "But I will lead thee to him, and thou shalt thyself ask him his name." So saying he entered the hall, and as Gylfi followed the door banged to behind him. He there saw many stately rooms crowded with people, some playing, some drinking, and others fighting with various weapons. Gangler, seeing a multitude of things, the meaning of which he could not comprehend, softly pronounced the following verse (from the Havamal, st. i.):—

Scan every gate
Ere thou go on,
With greatest caution;
For hard to say 'tis

Where foes are sitting
In this fair mansion.

He afterwards beheld three thrones raised one above another, with a man sitting on each of them. Upon his asking what the names of these lords might be, his guide answered: "He who sitteth on the lowest throne is a king; his name is Har (the High or Lofty One); the second is Jafnhar (*i.e.* equal to the High); but he who sitteth on the highest throne is called Thridi (the Third)." Har, perceiving the stranger, asked him what his errand was, adding that he should be welcome to eat and drink without cost, as were all those who remained in Hava Hall. Gangler said he desired first to ascertain whether there was any person present renowned for his wisdom.

"If thou art not the most knowing," replied Har, "I fear thou wilt hardly return safe. But go, stand there below, and propose thy questions, here sits one who will be able to answer them."

OF THE SUPREME DEITY.

3. Gangler thus began his discourse:—"Who is the first, or eldest of the gods?"

"In our language," replied Har, "he is called Alfadir (All-Father, or the Father of all); but in the old Asgard he had twelve names."

"Where is this God?" said Gangler; "what is his power? and what hath he done to display his glory?"

"He liveth," replied Har, "from all ages, he governeth all realms and swayeth all things great and small."

"He hath formed," added Jafnhar, "heaven and earth, and the air, and all things thereunto belonging."

"And what is more," continued Thridi, "he hath made man, and given him a soul which shall live and never perish though the body shall have mouldered away, or have been burnt to ashes. And all that are righteous shall dwell with him in the place called Gimli, or Vingolf; but the wicked shall go to Hel, and thence to Niflhel, which is below, in the ninth world."

"And where did this god remain before he made heaven and earth?" demanded Gangler.

"He was then," replied Har, "with the Hrimthursar."

OF THE PRIMORDIAL STATE OF THE UNIVERSE.

4. "But with what did he begin, or what was the beginning of things?" demanded Gangler.

"Hear," replied Har, "what is said in the Voluspa."

Tw'as time's first dawn,
When nought yet was,
Nor sand nor sea,
Nor cooling wave;
Earth was not there,
Nor heaven above.

Nought save a void
And yawning gulf.
But verdure none.

"Many ages before the earth was made," added Jafnhar, "was Niflheim formed, in the middle of which lies the spring called Hvergelmir, from which flow twelve rivers, Gjoll being the nearest to the gate of the abode of death."

"But, first of all," continued Thridi, "there was in the southern region (sphere) the world called Muspell. It is a world too luminous and glowing to be entered by those who are not indigenous there. He who sitteth on its borders (or the land's-end) to guard it

is named Surtur. In his hand he beareth a flaming falchion, and at the end of the world shall issue forth to combat, and shall vanquish all the gods, and consume the universe with fire."

ORIGIN OF THE HRIMTHURSAR, OR FROST-GIANTS.

5. "Tell me," said Gangler, "what was the state of things ere the races mingled, and nations came into being."

"When the rivers that are called Elivagar had flowed far from their sources," replied Har, "the venom which they rolled along hardened, as does dross that runs from a furnace, and became ice. When the rivers flowed no longer, and the ice stood still, the vapour arising from the venom gathered over it, and froze to rime, and in this manner were formed, in Ginnungagap, many layers of congealed vapour, piled one over the other."

"That part of Ginnungagap," added Jafnhar, "that lies towards the north was thus filled with heavy masses of gelid vapour and ice, whilst everywhere within were whirlwinds and fleeting mists. But the southern part of Ginnungagap was lighted by the sparks and flakes that flew into it from Muspellheim."

"Thus," continued Thridi, "whilst freezing cold and gathering gloom proceeded from Niflheim, that part of Ginnungagap looking towards Muspellheim was filled with glowing radiance, the intervening space remaining calm and light as wind-still air. And when the heated blast met the gelid vapour it melted it into drops, and, by the might of him who sent the heat, these drops quickened into life, and took a human semblance. The being thus formed was named Ymir, but the Frost-giants call him Orgelmir. From him descend the race of the Frost-giants (Hrimthursar), as it is said in the Voluspá, 'From Vidolf come all witches; from Vilmeith all wizards; from Svartthofdi all poison-seethers; and all giants from Ymir.' And the giant Vafthrúdnir, when Gangrad asked, 'Whence came Orgelmir the first of the sons of giants?' answered, 'The Elivagar cast out drops of venom that quickened into a giant. From him spring all our race, and hence are we so strong and mighty:'"

"How did the race of Ymir spread itself?" asked Gangler; "or dost thou believe that this giant was a god?"

"We are far from believing him to have been a god," replied Har, "for he was wicked as are all of his race, whom we call Frost-giants. And it is said that, when Ymir slept, he fell into a sweat, and from the pit of his left arm was born a man and a woman, and one of his feet engendered with the other a son, from whom descend the Frost-giants, and we therefore call Ymir the old Frost-giant."

OF THE COW AUDHUMLA, AND THE BIRTH OF ODIN.

6. "Where dwelt Ymir, and on what did he live?" asked Gangler.

"Immediately after the gelid vapours had been resolved into drops," replied Kar, "there was formed out of them the cow named Audhumla. Four streams of milk ran from her teats, and thus fed she Ymir."

"But on what did the cow feed?" questioned Gangler.

"The cow," answered Har, "supported herself by licking the stones that were covered with salt and hoar frost. The first day that she licked these stones there sprang from them, towards evening, the hairs of a man, the second day a head, and on the third an entire man, who was endowed with beauty, agility and power. He was called Bur, and was the father of Bor, who took for his wife Besla, the daughter of the giant Bolthorn. And they had three sons, Odin, Vili, and Ve; and it is our belief that this Odin, with his brothers, ruleth both heaven and earth, and that Odin is his true name, and that he is the most mighty of all the gods."

HOW THE SONS OF BOR SLEW YMIR AND FROM HIS BODY MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH.

7. "Was there," asked Gangler, "any kind of equality or any degree of good understanding between these two races?"

"Far from it," replied Har; "for the sons of Bor slew the giant Ymir, and when he fell there ran so much blood from his wounds, that the whole race of Frost-giants was drowned in it, except a

single giant, who saved himself with his household. He is called by the giants Bergelmir. He escaped by going on board his bark, and with him went his wife, and from them are descended the Frost-giants."

8. "And what became of the sons of Bor, whom ye look upon as gods?" asked Gangler.

"To relate this," replied Har, "is no trivial matter. They dragged the body of Ymir into the middle of Ginnungagap, and of it formed the earth. From Ymir's blood they made the seas and waters; from his flesh the land; from his bones the mountains; and his teeth and jaws, together with some bits of broken bones, served them to make the stones and pebbles."

"With the blood that ran from his wounds," added Jafnhar, "they made the vast ocean, in the midst of which they fixed the earth, the ocean encircling it as a ring, and hardy will he be who attempts to pass those waters."

"From his skull," continued Thridi, "they formed the heavens, which they placed over the earth, and set a dwarf at the corner of each of the four quarters. These dwarfs are called East, West, North, and South. They afterwards took the wandering sparks and red hot flakes that had been cast out of Muspellheim, and placed them in the heavens, both above and below, to give light unto the world, and assigned to every other errant coruscation a prescribed locality and motion. Hence it is recorded in ancient lore that from this time were marked out the days, and nights, and seasons."

"Such are the events that took place ere the earth obtained the form it now beareth."

"Truly great were the deeds ye tell me of!" exclaimed Gangler; "and wondrous in all its parts is the work thereby accomplished. But how is the earth fashioned?"

"It is round without," replied Har, "and encircled by the deep ocean, the outward shores of which were assigned for a dwelling to the race of giants. But within, round about the earth, they (the sons of Bor) raised a bulwark against turbulent giants, employing for this structure Ymir's eyebrows. To this bulwark they gave the name of Midgard. They afterwards tossed Ymir's brains into the air, and they became the clouds, for thus we find it recorded.

"Of Ymir's flesh was formed the earth; of his sweat (blood), the seas; of his bones, the mountains; of his hair the trees; of his skull, the heavens; but with his eyebrows the blithe gods built Midgard for the sons of men, whilst from his brains the lowering clouds were fashioned."

OF THE FORMATION OF THE FIRST MAN AND WOMAN.

9. "To make heaven and earth, to fix the sun and the moon in the firmament, and mark out the days and seasons, were, indeed, important labours," said Gangler; "but whence came the men who at present dwell in the world?"

"One day," replied Har, "as the sons of Bor were walking along the sea-beach they found two stems of wood, out of which they shaped a man and a woman. The first (Odin) infused into them life and spirit; the second (Vili) endowed them with reason and the power of motion; the third (Ve) gave them speech and features, hearing and vision. The man they called Ask, and the woman, Embla. From these two descend the whole human race whose assigned dwelling was within Midgard. Then the sons of Bor built in the middle of the universe the city called Asgard, where dwell the gods and their kindred, and from that abode work out so many wondrous things, both on the earth and in the heavens above it. There is in that city a place called Hlidskjalf, and when Odin is seated there on his lofty throne he sees over the whole world, discerns all the actions of men, and comprehends whatever he contemplates. His wife is Frigga, the daughter of Fjorgyn, and they and their offspring form the race that we call Æsir, a race that dwells in Asgard the old, and the regions around it, and that we know to be entirely divine. Wherefore Odin may justly be called All-father, for he is verily the father of all, of gods as well as of men, and to his power all things owe their existence. Earth is his daughter and his wife, and with her he had his first-born son, Asa-Thor, who is endowed with strength and valour, and therefore quelleth he everything that hath life."

OF NIGHT AND DAY.

10. "A giant called Njorvi," continued Har, "who dwelt in Jotunheim, had a daughter called Night (Nott) who, like all her race, was of a dark and swarthy complexion. She was first wedded to a man called Naglfari, and had by him a son named Aud, and afterwards to another man called Annar, by whom she had a daughter called Earth (Jord). She then espoused Delling, of the Æsir race, and their son was Day, (Dagr) a child light and beauteous like his father. Then took All-father, Night, and Day, her son, and gave them two horses and two cars, and set them up in the heavens that they might drive successively one after the other, each in twelve hours' time, round the world. Night rides first on her horse called Hrimfaxi, that every morn, as he ends his course, bedews the earth with the foam that falls from his bit. The horse made use of by Day is named Skinfaxi, from whose mane is shed light over the earth and the heavens."

OF THE SUN AND MOON.

11. "How doth All-father regulate the course of the sun and moon?" asked Gangler.

"There was formerly a man," replied Har, "named Mundilfari, who had two children so lovely and graceful that he called the male, Mani (moon), and the female, Sol (sun), who espoused the man named Glenur. But the gods being incensed at Mundilfari's presumption, took his children and placed them in the heavens, and let Sol drive the horses that draw the car of the sun, which the gods had made to give light to the world out of the sparks that flew from Muspellheim. These horses are called Arvak and Alsvið, and under their withers the gods placed two skins filled with air to cool and refresh them, or, according to some ancient traditions, a refrigerant substance called *isarnkul*. Mani was set to guide the moon in his course, and regulate his increasing and waning aspect. One day he carried off from the earth two children, named Bil and Hjuki, as they were returning from the spring called Byrgir, carrying between them the bucket called Saegr, on the pole Simul. Vidfinn was the father of these children, who always follow Mani (the moon), as we may easily observe even from the earth."

OF THE WOLVES THAT PURSUE THE SUN AND MOON

12. "But the sun," said Gangler, speeds at such a rate as if she feared that some one was pursuing her for her destruction."

"And well she may," replied Har, "for he that seeks her is not far behind, and she has no way to escape than to run before him."

"But who is he," asked Gangler, "that causes her this anxiety?"

"There are two wolves," answered Har; "the one called Skoll pursues the sun, and it is he that she fears, for he shall one day overtake and devour her; the other, called Hati, the son of Hroðvitnir, runs before her, and as eagerly pursues the moon that will one day be caught by him."

"Whence come these wolves?" asked Gangler.

"A hag," replied Har, "dwells in a wood, to the eastward of Midgard, called Jarnvid, (the Iron Wood,) which is the abode of a race of witches called Jarnvidjur. This old hag is the mother of many gigantic sons, who are all of them shaped like wolves, two of whom are the wolves thou askest about. There is one of that race, who is said to be the most formidable of all, called Managarm: he will be filled with the life-blood of men who draw near their end, and will swallow up the moon, and stain the heavens and the earth with blood. Then shall the sun grow dim, and the winds howl tumultuously to and fro."

OF THE WAY THAT LEADS TO HEAVEN.

13. "I must now ask," said Gangler, "which is the path leading from earth to heaven?"

"That is a senseless question," replied Har, with a smile of derision. "Hast thou not been told that the gods made a bridge from earth to heaven, and called it Bifrost? Thou must surely have seen it; but, perhaps, thou callest it the rainbow. It is of three hues, and is constructed with more art than any other work. But, strong though it be, it will be broken to pieces when the sons of Muspell, after having traversed great rivers, shall ride over it."

"Methinks," said Gangler, "the gods could not have been in earnest to erect a bridge so liable to be broken down, since it is in their power to make whatever they please."

"The gods," replied Har, "are not to be blamed on that account; Bifrost is of itself a very good bridge, but there is nothing in nature that can hope to make resistance when the sons of Muspell sally forth to the great combat."

THE GOLDEN AGE.

14. "What did All-father do after Asgard was made?" demanded Gangler.

"In the beginning," answered Har, "he appointed rulers, and bade them judge with him the fate of men, and regulate the government of the celestial city. They met for this purpose in a place called Idavoll, which is in the centre of the divine abode. Their first work was to erect a court or hall wherein are twelve seats for themselves, besides the throne which is occupied by All-father. This hall is the largest and most magnificent in the universe, being resplendent on all sides, both within and without, with the finest gold. Its name is Gladsheim. They also erected another hall for the sanctuary of the goddesses. It is a very fair structure, and called by men Vingolf. Lastly they built a smithy, and furnished it with hammers, tongs, and anvils, and with these made all the other requisite instruments, with which they worked in metal, stone and wood, and composed so large a quantity of the metal called gold that they made all their moveables of it. Hence that age was named the Golden Age. This was the age that lasted until the arrival of the women out of Jotunheim, who corrupted it."

ORIGIN OF THE DWARFS.

15. "Then the gods, seating themselves upon their thrones, distributed justice, and bethought them how the dwarfs had been bred in the mould of the earth, just as worms are in a dead body. It was, in fact, in Ymir's flesh that the dwarfs were engendered, and began to move and live. At first they were only maggots, but by the will of the gods they at length partook both of human shape and understanding, although they always dwell in rocks and caverns."

"Modsognir and Durin are the principal ones. As it is said in the Voluspa—

Then went the rulers there,
All gods most holy,
To their seats aloft,
And counsel together took,
Who should of dwarfs
The race then fashion,
From the livid bones
And blood of the giant.
Modsognir, chief

Of the dwarfish race,
And Durin too
Were then created.
And like to men
Dwarfs in the earth
Were formed in numbers
As Durin ordered.

OF THE ASH YGGDRASIL, MIMIR'S WELL., AND THE NORNS OR DESTINIES.

16. "Where," asked Gangler, "is the chief or holiest seat of the gods?"

"It is under the ash Yggdrasil," replied Har, "where the gods assemble every day in council."

"What is there remarkable in regard to that place?" said Gangler.

"That ash," answered Jafnhar, "is the greatest and best of all trees. Its branches spread over the whole world, and even reach above heaven. It has three roots very wide asunder. One of them extends to the Æsir, another to the Frost-giants in that very place where was formerly Ginnungagap, and the third stands over Niflheim, and under this root, which is constantly gnawed by Nidhogg, is Hvergelmir. But under the root that stretches out towards the Frost-giants there is Mimir's well, in which wisdom and wit lie hidden. The owner of this well is called Mimir. He is full of wisdom, because he drinks the waters of the well from the horn Gjoll

every morning. One day All-father came and begged a draught of this water, which he obtained, but was obliged to leave one of his eyes as a pledge for it.

"The third root of the ash is in heaven, and under it is the holy Urdar-fount. 'Tis here that the gods sit in judgment. Every day they ride up hither on horseback over Bifrost, which is called the Æsir Bridge. These are the names of the horses of the Æsir. Sleipnir is the best of them; he has eight legs, and belongs to Odin. The others are Gladr, Gyllir, Glær, Skeidbrimir, Silfrintoppr, Synir, Gils, Falhofnir, Gulltoppr, and Lettfeti. Baldur's horse was burnt with his master's body. As for Thor, he goes on foot, and is obliged every day to wade the rivers called Kormt and OErmt, and two others called Kerlaug.

"Through these shall Thor wade every day, as he fares to the doomstead under Yggdrasil's ash, else the Æsir Bridge would be in flames, and boiling hot would become the holy waters." "But tell me," said Gangler, "does fire burn over Bifrost?"

"That," replied Har, "which thou seest red in the bow, is burning fire; for the Frost-giants and the Mountain-giants would go up to heaven by that bridge if it were easy for every one to walk over it. There are in heaven many goodly homesteads, and none without a celestial ward. Near the fountain, which is under the ash, stands a very beauteous dwelling, out of which go three maidens, named Urd, Verdandi, and Skuld. These maidens fix the lifetime of all men, and are called Norns. But there are, indeed, many other Norns, for, when a man is born, there is a Norn to determine his fate. Some are known to be of heavenly origin, but others belong to the races of the elves and dwarfs; as it is said—

"Methinks the Norns were born far asunder, for they are not of the same race. Some belong to the Æsir, some to the Elves, and some are Dvalin's daughters."

"But if these Norns dispense the destinies of men," said Gangler, "they are, methinks, very unequal in their distribution; for some men are fortunate and wealthy, others acquire neither riches nor honours, some live to a good old age, while others are cut off in their prime."

"The Norns," replied Har, "who are of a good origin, are good themselves, and dispense good destinies. But those men to whom misfortunes happen ought to ascribe them to the evil Norns."

17. "What more wonders hast thou to tell me," said Gangler, "concerning the ash?"

"What I have further to say respecting it," replied Har, "is, that there is an eagle perched upon its branches who knows many things: between his eyes sits the hawk called Vedurfolnir. The squirrel named Ratatosk runs up and down the ash, and seeks to cause strife between the eagle and Nidhogg. Four harts run across the branches of the tree, and bite the buds. They are called Dainn, Divalinn, Duneyr, and Durathror. But there are so many snakes with Nidhogg in Hvergelmir that no tongue can recount them."

"It is also said that the Norns who dwell by the Urdar-fount draw every day water from the spring, and with it and the clay that lies around the fount sprinkle the ash, in order that its branches may not rot and wither away. This water is so holy that everything placed in the spring becomes as white as the film, within an eggshell. As it is said in the Voluspa—

An Ash know I standing,
Named Yggdrasil,
A stately tree sprinkled
With water the purest;
Thence come the dewdrops
That fall in the dales;
Ever blooming, it stands
O'er the Urdar-fountain.

"The dew that falls thence on the earth men call honey-dew, and it is the food of the bees. Two fowls are fed in the Urdar-fount; they are called swans, and from them are descended all the birds of this species."

OF THE VARIOUS CELESTIAL REGIONS.

18. "Thou tellest me many wonderful things of heaven," said Gangler, "but what other homesteads are to be seen there?"

"There are many other fair homesteads there," replied Har, "one of them is named Elf-home (Alfheim), wherein dwell the beings

called the Elves of Light; but the Elves of Darkness live under the earth, and differ from the others still more in their actions than in their appearance. The Elves of Light are fairer than the sun, but the Elves of Darkness blacker than pitch. There is also a mansion called Breidablik, which is not inferior to any other in beauty; and another named Glitnir, the wall, columns and beams of which are of ruddy gold, and the roof of silver. There is also the stead called Himinbjorg, that stands on the borders where Bifrost touches heaven, and the stately mansion belonging to Odin, called Valaskjalf, which was built by the gods, and roofed with pure silver, and in which is the throne called Hlidskjalf. When All-father is seated on this throne, he can see over the whole world. On the southern edge of heaven is the most beautiful homestead of all, brighter than the sun itself. It is called Gimli, and shall stand when both heaven and earth have passed away, and good and righteous men shall dwell therein for everlasting ages."

"But what will preserve this abode when Surtur's fire consumes heaven and earth?" asked Gangler.

"We are told," replied Har, "that towards the south there is another heaven above this called Andlang, and again above this a third heaven called Vidblain. In this last, we think Gimli must be seated, but we deem that the Elves of Light abide in it now."

OF THE WIND AND THE SEASONS.

19. "Tell me," said Gangler, "whence comes the wind, which is so strong that it moves the ocean and fans fire to flame, yet, strong though it be, no mortal eye can discern it? wonderfully, therefore, must it be shapen."

"I can tell thee all about it," answered Har; "thou must know that at the northern extremity of the heavens sits a giant called Hræsvelgur, clad with eagles' plumes. When he spreads out his wings for flight, the winds arise from under them."

20. "Tell me further," said Gangler, "why the summer should be hot, and the winter cold."

"A wise man would not ask such a question, which every one could answer," replied Har; "but, if thou hast been so dull as not to have heard the reason, I will rather forgive thee for once asking a foolish question than suffer thee to remain any longer in ignorance of what ought to have been known to thee. The father of Summer is called Svasuth, who is such a gentle and delicate being that what is mild is from him called sweet. The father of Winter has two names, Vindloni and Vindsval. He is the son of Vasad, and, like all his race, has an icy breath, and is of a grim and gloomy aspect."

OF ODIN.

21. "I must now ask thee," said Gangler, "who are the gods that men are bound to believe in?"

"There are twelve gods," replied Har, "to whom divine honours ought to be rendered."

"Nor are the goddesses," added Jafnhar, "less divine and mighty."

"The first and eldest of the Æsir," continued Thridi, "is Odin. He governs all things, and, although the other deities are powerful, they all serve and obey him as children do their father. Frigga is his wife. She foresees the destinies of men, but never reveals what is to come. For thus it is said that Odin himself told Loki, 'Senseless Loki, why wilt thou pry into futurity, Frigga alone knoweth the destinies of all, though she telleth them never?'

"Odin is named Alfadir (All-father), because he is the father of all the gods, and also Valfadir (Choosing Father), because he chooses for his sons all of those who fall in combat. For their abode he has prepared Valhalla and Vingolf, where they are called Einherjar (Heroes or Champions). Odin is also called Hangagud, Haptagud, and Farmagud, and, besides these, was named in many ways when he went to King Geirraudr," forty-nine names in all.

"A great many names, indeed!" exclaimed Gangler; "surely that man must be very wise who knows them all distinctly, and can tell on what occasions they were given."

"It requires, no doubt," replied Har, "a good memory to recollect readily all these names, but I will tell thee in a few words what principally contributed to confer them upon him. It was the great variety of languages; for the various nations were obliged

to translate his name into their respective tongues, in order that they might supplicate and worship him. Some of his names, however, have been owing to adventures that happened to him on his journeys, and which are related in old stories. Nor canst thou ever pass for a wise man if thou are not able to give an account of these wonderful adventures."

OF THOR.

22. "I now ask thee," said Gangler, "what are the names of the other gods. What are their functions, and what have they brought to pass?"

"The mightiest of them," replied Har, "is Thor. He is called Asa-Thor and Auku-Thor, and is the strongest of gods and men. His realm is named Thrudvang, and his mansion Bilskirnir, in which are five hundred and forty halls. It is the largest house ever built."

"Thor has a car drawn by two goats called Tanngniost and Tanngrisnir. From his driving about in this car he is called Auku-Thor (Charioteer-Thor). He likewise possesses three very precious things. The first is a mallet called Mjolnir, which both the Frost and Mountain Giants know to their cost when they see it hurled against them in the air; and no wonder, for it has split many a skull of their fathers and kindred. The second rare thing he possesses is called the belt of strength or prowess (Megingjardir). When he girds it about him his divine might is doubly augmented; the third, also very precious, being his iron gauntlets, which he is obliged to put on whenever he would lay hold of the handle of his mallet. There is no one so wise as to be able to relate all Thor's marvellous exploits, yet I could tell thee so many myself that hours would be whiled away ere all that I know had been recounted."

OF BALDUR.

23. "I would rather," said Gangler, "hear something about the other Æsir."

"The second son of Odin," replied Har, "is Baldur, and it may be truly said of him that he is the best, and that all mankind are loud in his praise. So fair and dazzling is he in form and features, that rays of light seem to issue from him; and thou mayst have some idea of the beauty of his hair, when I tell thee that the whitest of all plants is called Baldur's brow. Baldur is the mildest, the wisest, and the most eloquent of all the Æsir, yet such is his nature that the judgment he has pronounced can never be altered. He dwells in the heavenly mansion called Breidablik, in which nothing unclean can enter."

OF NJORD.

24. "The third god," continued Har, "is Njord, who dwells in the heavenly region called Noatun. He rules over the winds, and checks the fury of the sea and of fire, and is therefore invoked by sea-farers and fishermen. He is so wealthy that he can give possessions and treasures to those who call on him for them. Yet Njord is not of the lineage of the Æsir, for he was born and bred in Vanaheim. But the Vanir gave him as hostage to the Æsir, receiving from them in his stead Hoenir. By this means was peace re-established between the Æsir and Vanir. Njord took to wife Skadi, the daughter of the giant Thjassi. She preferred dwelling in the abode formerly belonging to her father, which is situated among rocky mountains, in the region called Thrymheim, but Njord loved to reside near the sea. They at last agreed that they should pass together nine nights in Thrymheim, and then three in Noatun. One day, when Njord came back from the mountains to Noatun, he thus sang—

Of mountains I'm weary,
Not long was I there,
Not more than nine nights;
But the howl of the wolf
Methought sounded ill
To the song of the swan-bird.

"To which Skadi sang in reply—

Ne'er can I sleep
In my couch on the strand,
For the screams of the sea-fowl,
The mew as he comes
Every morn from the main
Is sure to awake me.

"Skadi then returned to the rocky mountains, and abode in Thrymheim. There, fastening on her snow-skates and taking her bow, she passes her time in the chase of savage beasts, and is called the Ondur goddess, or Ondurdis. As it is said—

Thrymheim's the land
Where Thjassi abode
That mightiest of giants,
But snow-skating Skadi
Now dwells there, I trow,
In her father's old mansion.

OF THE GOD FREY, AND THE GODDESS FREYJA.

25. "Njord had afterwards, at his residence at Noatun, two children, a son named Frey, and a daughter called Freyja, both of them beauteous and mighty. Frey is one of the most celebrated of the gods. He presides over rain and sunshine, and all the fruits of the earth, and should be invoked in order to obtain good harvests, and also for peace. He, moreover, dispenses wealth among men. Freyja is the most propitious of the goddesses; her abode in heaven is called Folkvang. To whatever field of battle she rides, she asserts her right to one half of the slain, the other half belonging to Odin. As it is said—

Folkvang 'tis called
Where Freyja hath right
To dispose of the hall seats
Every day of the slain,
She chooseth the half,
And half leaves to Odin.

"Her mansion, called Sessrumnir, is large and magnificent; thence she sallies forth in a car drawn by two cats. She lends a very favourable ear to those who sue to her for assistance. It is from her name that women of birth and fortune are called in our language Freyja. She is very fond of love ditties, and all lovers would do well to invoke her."

OF TYR.

26. "All the gods appear to me," said Gangler, "to have great power, and I am not at all surprised that ye are able to perform so many great achievements, since ye are so well acquainted with the attributes and functions of each god, and know what is befitting to ask from each, in order to succeed. But are there any more of them besides those you have already mentioned?"

"Ay," answered Har, "there is Tyr, who is the most daring and intrepid of all the gods. 'Tis he who dispenses valour in war, hence warriors do well to invoke him. It has become proverbial to say of a man who surpasses all others in valour that he is *Tyr-strong*, or valiant as Tyr. A man noted for his wisdom is also said to be 'wise as Tyr.' Let me give thee a proof of his intrepidity. When the Æsir were trying to persuade the wolf, Fenrir, to let himself be bound up with the chain, Gleipnir, he, fearing that they would never afterwards unloose him, only consented on the condition that while they were chaining him he should keep Tyr's right hand between his jaws. Tyr did not hesitate to put his hand in the monster's mouth, but when Fenrir perceived that the Æsir had no intention to unchain him, he bit the hand off at that point, which has ever since been called the wolf's joint. From that time Tyr has had but one hand. He is not regarded as a peacemaker among men."

OF THE OTHER GODS.

27. "There is another god," continued Har, "named Bragi, who is celebrated for his wisdom, and more especially for his eloquence and correct forms of speech. He is not only eminently skilled in poetry, but the art itself is called from his name *Bragr*, which epithet is also applied to denote a distinguished poet or poetess. His wife is named Iduna. She keeps in a box the apples which the gods, when they feel old age approaching, have only to taste of to become young again. It is in this manner that they will be kept in renovated youth until Ragnarok."

"Methinks," interrupted Gangler, "the gods have committed a great treasure to the guardianship and good faith of Iduna."

"And hence it happened," replied Har, smiling, "that they once ran the greatest risk imaginable, as I shall have occasion to tell thee when thou hast heard the names of the other deities."

28. "One of them is Heimdall, called also the White God. He is the son of nine virgins, who were sisters, and is a very sacred and powerful deity. He also bears the appellation of the Gold-toothed, on account of his teeth being of pure gold, and also that of Hallinskithi. His horse is called Gulltopp, and he dwells in Himinbjorg at the end of Bifrost. He is the warder of the gods, and is therefore placed on the borders of heaven, to prevent the giants from forcing their way over the bridge. He requires less sleep than a bird, and sees by night, as well as by day, a hundred miles around him. So acute is his ear that no sound escapes him, for he can even hear the grass growing on the earth, and the wool on a sheep's back. He has a horn called the Gjallar-horn, which is heard throughout the universe. His sword is called Hofud (Head).

HODUR THE BLIND, ASSASSIN OF BALDUR

29. "Among the Æsir," continued Har, "we also reckon Hodor, who is blind, but extremely strong. Both gods and men would be very glad if they never had occasion to pronounce his name, for they will long have cause to remember the deed perpetrated by his hand.

30. "Another god is Vidar, surnamed the Silent, who wears very thick shoes. He is almost as strong as Thor himself, and the gods place great reliance on him in all critical conjunctures.

31. "Vali, another god, is the son of Odin and Rinda, he is bold in war, and an excellent archer.

32. "Another is called Ullur, who is the son of Sif, and stepson of Thor. He is so well skilled in the use of the bow, and can go so fast on his snow-skates, that in these arts no one can contend with him. He is also very handsome in his person, and possesses every quality of a warrior, wherefore it is befitting to invoke him in single combats.

33. "The name of another god is Forseti, who is the son of Baldur and Nanna, the daughter of Nef. He possesses the heavenly mansion called Glitnir, and all disputants at law who bring their cases before him go away perfectly reconciled.

"His tribunal is the best that is to be found among gods or men.

OF LOKI AND HIS PROGENY.

34. "There is another deity," continued Har, "reckoned in the number of the Æsir, whom some call the calumniator of the gods, the contriver of all fraud and mischief, and the disgrace of gods and men. His name is Loki or Loptur. He is the son of the giant Farbauti. His mother is Laufey or Nal; his brothers are Byleist and Helblindi. Loki is handsome and well made, but of a very fickle mood, and most evil disposition. He surpasses all beings in those arts called Cunning and Perfidy. Many a time has he exposed the gods to very great perils, and often extricated them again by his artifices. His wife is called Siguna, and their son Nari.

35. "Loki," continued Har, "has likewise had three children by Angurbodi, a giantess of Jotunheim. The first is the wolf Fenrir; the second Jormungand, the Midgard serpent; the third Hela (Death). The gods were not long ignorant that these monsters continued to be bred up in Jotunheim, and, having had recourse to divination, became aware of all the evils they would have to suffer from them; their being sprung from such a mother was a bad presage, and from such a sire was still worse. All-father therefore deemed it advisable to send one of the gods to bring them to him. When they came he threw the serpent into that deep ocean by which the earth is engirdled. But the monster has grown to such an enormous size that, holding his tail in his mouth, he encircles the whole earth. Hela he cast into Nifelheim, and gave her power over nine worlds (regions), into which she distributes those who are sent to her, that is to say, all who die through sickness or old age. Here she possesses a habitation protected by exceedingly high walls and strongly barred gates. Her hall is called Elvidnir; Hunger is her table; Starvation, her knife; Delay, her man; Slowness, her maid; Precipice, her threshold; Care, her bed; and Burning Anguish forms the hangings of her apartments. The one half of her body is livid, the other half the colour of human flesh. She may therefore easily be recognized; the more so, as she has a dreadfully stern and grim countenance.

"The wolf Fenrir was bred up among the gods; but Tyr alone had the daring to go and feed him. Nevertheless, when the gods perceived that he every day increased prodigiously in size, and that the oracles warned them that he would one day become fatal to them, they determined to make a very strong iron fetter for him, which they called Læding. Taking this fetter to the wolf, they bade him try his strength on it. Fenrir, perceiving that the enterprise would not be very difficult for him, let them do what they pleased, and then, by great muscular exertion, burst the chain and set himself at liberty. The gods, having seen this, made another fetter, half as strong again as the former, which they called Dromi, and prevailed on the wolf to put it on, assuring him that, by breaking this, he would give an undeniable proof of his vigour.

"The wolf saw well enough that it would not be so easy to break this fetter, but finding at the same time that his strength had increased since he broke Læding, and thinking that he could never become famous without running some risk, voluntarily submitted to be chained. When the gods told him that they had finished their task, Fenrir shook himself violently, stretched his limbs, rolled on the ground, and at last burst his chains, which flew in pieces all around him. He then freed himself from Dromi, which gave rise to the proverb, 'to get loose out of Læding, or to dash out of Dromi,' when anything is to be accomplished by strong efforts.

BINDING THE WOLF FENIR

"After this, the gods despaired of ever being able to bind the wolf; wherefore All-father sent Skirnir, the messenger of Frey, into the country of the Dark Elves (Svartalfaheim) to engage certain dwarfs to make the fetter called Gleipnir. It was fashioned out of six things; to wit, the noise made by the footfall of a cat; the beards of women; the roots of stones; the sinews of bears; the breath of fish; and the spittle of birds. Though thou mayest not have heard of these things before, thou mayest easily convince thyself that we have not been telling thee lies. Thou must have seen that women have no beards, that cats make no noise when they run, and that there are no roots under stones. Now I know what has been told thee to be equally true, although there may be some things thou art not able to furnish a proof of."

"I believe what thou hast told me to be true," replied Gangler, "for what thou hast adduced in corroboration of thy statement is conceivable. But how was the fetter smithied?"

"This can I tell thee," replied Har, "that the fetter was as smooth and soft as a silken string, and yet, as thou wilt presently hear, of very great strength. When it was brought to the gods, they were profuse in their thanks to the messenger for the trouble he had given himself; and taking the wolf with them to the island called Lyngvi, in the Lake Amsvartnir, they showed him the cord, and expressed their wish that he would try to break it, assuring him at the same time that it was somewhat stronger than its thinness would warrant a person in supposing it to be. They took it themselves, one after another, in their hands, and after attempting in vain to break it, said, 'Thou alone, Fenrir, art able to accomplish such a feat.'

"'Methinks,' replied the wolf, 'that I shall acquire no fame in breaking such a slender cord; but if any artifice has been employed in making it, slender though it seems, it shall never come on my feet.'

"The gods assured him that he would easily break a limber silken cord, since he had already burst asunder iron fetters of the most solid construction. 'But if thou shouldst not succeed in breaking it,' they added, 'thou wilt show that thou art too weak to cause the gods any fear, and we will not hesitate to set thee at liberty without delay.'

"'I fear me much,' replied he wolf, 'that if ye once bind me so fast that I shall be unable to free myself by my own efforts, ye will be in no haste to unloose me. Loath am I, therefore, to have this cord wound round me; but in order that ye may not doubt my courage, I will consent, provided one of you put his hand into my mouth as a pledge that ye intend me no deceit.'

"The gods wistfully looked at each other, and found that they had only the choice of two evils, until Tyr stepped forward and intrepidly put his right hand between the monster's jaws. Hereupon

the gods, having tied up the wolf, he forcibly stretched himself as he had formerly done, and used all his might to disengage himself, but the more efforts he made the tighter became the cord, until all the gods, except Tyr, who lost his hand, burst into laughter at the sight.

"When the gods saw that the wolf was effectually bound, they took the chain called Gelgja, which was fixed to the fetter, and drew it through the middle of a large rock named Gjoll, which they sank very deep into the earth; afterwards, to make it still more secure, they fastened the end of the cord to a massive stone called Thviti, which they sank still deeper. The wolf made in vain the most violent efforts to break loose, and opening his tremendous jaws endeavoured to bite them. The gods seeing this, thrust a sword into his mouth, which pierced his under-jaw to the hilt, so that the point touched the palate. He then began to howl horribly, and since that time the foam flows continually from his mouth in such abundance that it forms the river called Von. There will he remain until Ragnarok."

"Verily," said Gangler, "an evil progeny is that of Loki, yet most mighty and powerful; but since the gods have so much to fear from the wolf, why did they not slay him?"

"The gods have so much respect for the sanctity of their peace-steeds," replied Har, "that they would not stain them with the blood of the wolf, although prophecy had intimated to them that he must one day become the bane of Odin."

OF THE GODDESSES.

36. "Tell me now," said Gangler, "which are the goddesses?"

"The first," replied Har, "is Frigga, who has a magnificent mansion called Fensalir. The second is Saga, who dwells at Sokkvabekk, a very large and stately abode. The third is Eir, the best of all in the healing art. The fourth, named Gefjon, is a maid, and all those who die maids become her hand-maidens. The fifth is Fulla, who is also a maid, and goes about with her hair flowing over her shoulders, and her head adorned with a gold ribbon. She is entrusted with the toilette and slippers of Frigga, and admitted into the most important secrets of that goddess. Freyja is ranked next to Frigga: she is wedded to a person called Odur, and their daughter, named Hnossa, is so very handsome that whatever is beautiful and precious is called by her name (*hnosir*). But Odur left his wife in order to travel into very remote countries. Since that time Freyja continually weeps, and her tears are drops of pure gold. She has a great variety of names, for having gone over many countries in search of her husband, each people gave her a different name. She is thus called Mardoll, Horn, Gefn, and Syr, and also Vanadis. She possesses the necklace Brising. The seventh goddess is Sjöfna, who delights in turning men's hearts and thoughts to love; hence a wooer is called, from her name, *Sjafni*. The eighth, called Lofna, is so mild and gracious to those who invoke her, that by a peculiar privilege which either All-Father himself or Frigga has given her, she can remove every obstacle that may prevent the union of lovers sincerely attached to each other. Hence her name is applied to denote love, and whatever is beloved by men. Vora, the ninth goddess, listens to the oaths that men take, and particularly to the troth plighted between man and woman, and punishes those who keep not their promises. She is wise and prudent, and so penetrating that nothing remains hidden from her. Syn, the tenth, keeps the door in the hall, and shuts it against those who ought not to enter. She presides at trials when any thing is to be denied on oath, whence the proverb, 'Syn (negation) is set against it,' when ought is denied. Hlina, the eleventh, has the care of those whom Frigga intends to deliver from peril. Snotra, the twelfth, is wise and courteous, and men and women who possess these qualities have her name applied to them. Gna, the thirteenth, is the messenger that Frigga sends into the various worlds on her errands. She has a horse that can run through air and water, called Hofvarpnir. Once, as she drove out, certain Vanir saw her car in the air, when one of them exclaimed,

What flieth there?
What goeth there?
In the air aloft what glideth?

"She answered,

I fly not though I go,
And glide through the air
On Hofvarpnir,
Whose sire's Hamskerpir,
And dam Gardrofa.

"Sol and Bil are also reckoned among the goddesses, but their nature has already been explained to thee.

37. "There are besides these a great many other goddesses, whose duty it is to serve in Valhalla; to bear in the drink and take care of the drinking-horns and whatever belongs to the table. They are named in Grimnismal, and are called Valkyrior. Odin sends them to every field of battle, to make choice of those who are to be slain, and to sway the victory. Gudur, Rota, and the youngest of the Norns, Skuld, also ride forth to choose the slain and turn the combat. Jord (earth), the mother of Thor, and Rinda, the mother of Vali, are also reckoned amongst the goddesses."

OF FREY AND GERDA.

38. "There was a man," continued Har, "named Gymir, who had for wife Aurboda, of the race of the Mountain-giants. Their daughter is Gerda, who is the most beautiful of all women. One day Frey having placed himself in Hlidskjalf, to take a view of the whole universe, perceived, as he looked towards the north, a large and stately mansion which a woman was going to enter, and as she lifted up the latch of the door so great a radiance was thrown from her hand that the air and waters, and all worlds were illuminated by it. At this sight, Frey, as a just punishment for his audacity in mounting on that sacred throne, was struck with sudden sadness, insomuch so, that on his return home he could neither speak, nor sleep, nor drink, nor did any one dare to inquire the cause of his affliction; but Njord, at last, sent for Skirnir, the messenger of Frey, and charged him to demand of his master why he thus refused to speak to any one. Skirnir promised to do this, though with great reluctance, fearing that all he had to expect was a severe reprimand. He, however, went to Frey, and asked him boldly why he was so sad and silent. Frey answered, that he had seen a maiden of such surpassing beauty that if he could not possess her he should not live much longer, and that this was what rendered him so melancholy. 'Go, therefore,' he added, 'and ask her hand for me, and bring her here whether her father be willing or not, and I will amply reward thee.' Skirnir undertook to perform the task, provided he might be previously put in possession of Frey's sword, which was of such excellent quality that it would of itself strew a field with carnage whenever the owner ordered it. Frey, impatient of delay, immediately made him a present of the sword, and Skirnir set out on his journey and obtained the maiden's promise, that within nine nights she would come to a place called Barey, and there wed Frey. Skirnir having reported the success of his message, Frey exclaimed,

Long is one night,
Long are two nights,
But how shall I hold out three?
Shorter hath seemed
A month to me oft
Than of this longing-time the half.

"Frey having thus given away his sword, found himself without arms when he fought with Beli, and hence it was that he slew him with a stag's antlers."

"But it seems very astonishing," interrupted Gangler, "that such a brave hero as Frey should give away his sword without keeping another equally good for himself. He must have been in a very bad plight when he encountered Beli, and methinks must have mightily repented him of the gift."

"That combat," replied Har, "was a trifling affair. Frey could have killed Beli with a blow of his fist had he felt inclined: but the time will come when the sons of Muspell shall issue forth to the fight, and then, indeed, will Frey truly regret having parted with his falchion."

OF THE JOYS OF VALHALLA.

39. "If it be as thou hast told me," said Gangler, "that all men who have fallen in fight since the beginning of the world are gone to

Odin, in Valhalla, what has he to give them to eat, for methinks there must be a great crowd there?"

"What thou sayest is quite true," replied Har, "the crowd there is indeed great, but great though it be, it will still increase, and will be thought too little when the wolf cometh. But however great the band of men in Valhalla may be, the flesh of the boar Sæhrimnir will more than suffice for their sustenance. For although this boar is sodden every morning he becomes whole again every night. But there are few, methinks, who are wise enough to give thee, in this respect, a satisfactory answer to thy question. The cook is called Andhrimnir, and the kettle Eldhrimnir. As it is said,—'Andhrimnir cooks in Eldhrimnir, Sæhrimnir: 'Tis the best of flesh, though few know how much is required for the Einherjar."

"But has Odin," said Gangler, "the same food as the heroes?"

"Odin," replied Har, 'gives the meat that is set before him to two wolves, called Geri and Freki, for he himself stands in no need of food. Wine is for him both meat and drink.

"Two ravens sit on Odin's shoulders and whisper in his ear the tidings and events they have heard and witnessed. They are called Hugin and Munin. He sends them out at dawn of day to fly over the whole world, and they return at eve towards meal time. Hence it is that Odin knows so many things, and is called the Raven's God. As it is said,—

Hugin and Munin
Each dawn take their flight
Earth's fields over.
I fear me for Hugin,
Lest he come not back,
But much more for Munin.

40. "What have the heroes to drink," said Gangler, "in sufficient quantity to correspond to their plentiful supply of meat: do they only drink water?"

"A very silly question is that," replied Har; "dost thou imagine that All-Father would invite kings and jarls and other great men and give them nothing to drink but water! In that case, methinks, many of those who had endured the greatest hardships, and received deadly wounds in order to obtain access to Valhalla, would find that they had paid too great a price for their water drink, and would indeed have reason to complain were they there to meet with no better entertainment. But thou wilt see that the case is quite otherwise. For the she-goat, named Heidrun, stands above Valhalla, and feeds on the leaves of a very famous tree called Læraeth, and from her teats flows mead in such great abundance that every day a stoop, large enough to hold more than would suffice for all the heroes, is filled with it."

"Verily," said Gangler, "a mighty useful goat is this, and methinks the tree she feeds on must have very singular virtues."

"Still more wonderful," replied Har, "is what is told of the stag Eikthyrnir. This stag also stands over Valhalla and feeds upon the leaves of the same tree, and whilst he is feeding so many drops fall from his antlers down into Hvergelmir that they furnish sufficient water for the rivers that issuing thence flow through the celestial abodes."

41. "Wondrous things are these which thou tellest me of," said Gangler, "and Valhalla must needs be an immense building, but methinks there must often be a great press at the door among such a number of people constantly thronging in and out?"

"Why dost thou not ask," replied Har, "how many doors there are, and what are their dimensions; then wouldst thou be able to judge whether there is any difficulty in going in and out. Know, then, that there is no lack of either seats or doors. As it is said in Grímnismál:—

Five hundred doors
And forty more
Methinks are in Valhalla.
Eight hundred heroes through each door
Shall issue forth
Against the wolf to combat.

42. "A mighty band of men must be in Valhalla," said Gangler, "and methinks Odin must be a great chieftain to command such a numerous host. But how do the heroes pass their time when they are not drinking?"

"Every day," replied Har, "as soon as they have dressed themselves they ride out into the court (or field), and there fight until they cut each other to pieces. This is their pastime, but when meal-time approaches they remount their steeds and return to drink in Valhalla. As it is said:—

The Einherjar all
On Odin's plain
Hew daily each other,
While chosen the slain are.
From the fray they then ride,
And drink ale with the Æsir.

"Thou hast thus reason to say that Odin is great and mighty, for there are many proofs of this. As it is said in the very words of the Æsir:—

The ash Yggdrasil
Is the first of trees,
As Skidbladnir of ships,
Odin of Æsir,
Sleipnir of steeds,
Bifrost of bridges,
Bragi of bards,
Habrok of hawks,
And Garm of hounds is.

OF THE HORSE SLEIPNIR.

43. "Thou mad'st mention," said Gangler, "of the horse Sleipnir. To whom does he belong, and what is there to say respecting him?"

"Thou seemest to know nothing either about Sleipnir or his origin," replied Har, "but thou wilt no doubt find what thou wilt hear worthy of thy notice. Once on a time when the gods were constructing their abodes, and had already finished Midgard and Valhalla, a certain artificer came and offered to build them, in the space of three half years, a residence so well fortified that they should be perfectly safe from the incursion of the Frost-giants, and the giants of the mountains, even although they should have penetrated within Midgard. But he demanded for his reward the goddess Freyja, together with the sun and moon. After long deliberation the Æsir agreed to his terms, provided he would finish the whole work himself without any one's assistance, and all within the space of one winter, but if anything remained unfinished on the first day of summer, he should forfeit the recompense agreed on. On being told these terms, the artificer stipulated that he should be allowed the use of his horse, called Svadilfari, and this, by the advice of Loki, was granted to him. He accordingly set to work on the first day of winter, and during the night let his horse draw stone for the building. The enormous size of the stones struck the Æsir with astonishment, and they saw clearly that the horse did one half more of the toilsome work than his master. Their bargain, however, had been concluded in the presence of witnesses, and confirmed by solemn oaths, for without these precautions a giant would not have thought himself safe among the Æsir, especially when Thor returned from an expedition he had then undertaken towards the east against evil demons.

"As the winter drew to a close the building was far advanced, and the bulwarks were sufficiently high and massive to render this residence impregnable. In short, when it wanted but three days to summer the only part that remained to be finished was the gateway. Then sat the gods on their seats of justice and entered into consultation, inquiring of one another who among them could have advised to give Freyja away to Jotunheim, or to plunge the heavens in darkness by permitting the giant to carry away the sun and moon. They all agreed that no one but Loki, the son of Laufey, and the author of so many evil deeds, could have given such bad counsel, and that he should be put to a cruel death if he did not contrive some way or other to prevent the artificer from completing his task and obtaining the stipulated recompense. They immediately proceeded to lay hands on Loki, who, in his fright, promised upon oath that let it cost him what it would, he would so manage matters that the man should lose his reward. That very night, when the artificer went with Svadilfari for building stone, a mare suddenly ran out of a forest and began to neigh. The horse being thus excited, broke loose and ran after the mare into the forest, which obliged the man also to run after his horse, and thus between one and the other the whole night was lost, so that at

dawn the work had not made the usual progress. The man seeing that he had no other means of completing his task, resumed his own gigantic stature, and the gods now clearly perceived that it was in reality a Mountain-giant who had come amongst them. No longer regarding their oaths, they, therefore, called on Thor, who immediately ran to their assistance, and lifting up his mallet Mjølner paid the workman his wages, not with the sun and moon, and not even by sending him back to Jotunheim, for with the first blow he shattered the giant's skull to pieces, and hurled him headlong into Nifelhel. But Loki had run such a race with Svadilfari that shortly after he bore a grey foal with eight legs. This is the horse Sleipnir, which excels all horses ever possessed by gods or men."

OF THE SHIP SKIDBLADNIR.

44. "What hast thou to say," demanded Gangler, "of Skidbladnir, which thou toldst me was the best of ships? Is there no other ship as good or as large?"

"Skidbladnir," replied Har, "is without doubt the best and most artfully constructed of any, but the ship Nagfar is of larger size. They were dwarfs, the sons of Ivaldi, who built Skidbladnir, and made a present of her to Frey. She is so large that all the Æsir with their weapons and war stores find room on board her. As soon as the sails are set a favourable breeze arises and carries her to her place of destination, and she is made of so many pieces, and with so much skill, that when she is not wanted for a voyage Frey may fold her together like a piece of cloth, and put her in his pocket."

"A good ship truly, is Skidbladnir," said Gangler, "and many cunning contrivances and spells must, no doubt, have been used in her construction."

THOR'S ADVENTURES ON HIS JOURNEY TO THE LAND OF THE GIANTS.

45. "But tell me," he (Gangler) continued, "did it ever happen to Thor in his expeditions to be overcome either by spells or by downright force?"

"Few can take upon them to affirm this," replied Har, "and yet it has often fared hard enough with him; but had he in reality been worsted in any rencounter there would be no need to make mention of it, since all are bound to believe that nothing can resist his power."

"It would, therefore, appear," said Gangler, "that I have asked of you things that none of you are able to tell me of."

"There are, indeed, some such rumours current among us," answered Jafnhar, "but they are hardly credible; however, there is one sitting here can impart them to thee, and thou shouldst the rather believe him, for never having yet uttered an untruth, he will not now begin to deceive thee with false stories."

"Here then will I stand," said Gangler, "and listen to what ye have to say, but if ye cannot answer my question satisfactorily I shall look upon you as vanquished."

Then spake Thrídi and said, "We can easily conceive that thou art desirous of knowing these tidings, but it behooves thee to guard a becoming silence respecting them. The story I have to relate is this:—

46. "One day the God Thor set out in his car drawn by two he-goats, and accompanied by Loki, on a journey. Night coming on, they put up at a peasant's cottage, where Thor killed his goats, and after flaying them, put them in the kettle. When the flesh was sodden, he sat down with his fellow-traveller to supper, and invited the peasant and his family to partake of his repast. The peasant's son was named Thjalfi, and his daughter Roska. Thor bade them throw all the bones into the goats' skins which were spread out near the fire-place, but young Thjalfi broke one of the shank bones with his knife to come to the marrow. Thor having passed the night in the cottage, rose at the dawn of day, and when he was dressed took his mallet Mjølner, and lifting it up, consecrated the goats' skins, which he had no sooner done than the two goats re-assumed their wonted form, only that one of them now limped on one of its hind legs. Thor perceiving this, said that the peasant, or one of his family, had handled the shank bone of this goat too roughly, for he saw clearly that it was broken. It may readily be imagined how frightened the peasant was when he saw

Thor knit his brows, and grasp the handle of his mallet with such force that the joints of his fingers became white from the exertion. Fearing to be struck down by the very looks of the god, the peasant and his family made joint suit for pardon, offering whatever they possessed as an atonement for the offence committed. Thor, seeing their fear, desisted from his wrath, and became more placable, and finally contented himself by requiring the peasant's children, Thjalfi and Roska, who became his bond-servants, and have followed him ever since.

Leaving his goats with the peasant, Thor proceeded eastward on the road to Jotunheim, until he came to the shores of a vast and deep sea, which having passed over he penetrated into a strange country along with his companions, Loki, Thjalfi, and Roska. They had not gone far before they saw before them an immense forest, through which they wandered all day. Thjalfi was of all men the swiftest of foot. He bore Thor's wallet, but the forest was a bad place for finding anything eatable to stow in it. When it became dark, they searched on all sides for a place where they might pass the night, and at last came to a very large hall with an entrance that took up the whole breadth of one of the ends of the building. Here they chose them a place to sleep in; but towards midnight were alarmed by an earthquake which shook the whole edifice. Thor, rising up, called on his companions to seek with him a place of safety. On the right they found an adjoining chamber, into which they entered, but while the others, trembling with fear, crept into the furthest corner of this retreat, Thor remained at the doorway with his mallet in his hand, prepared to defend himself, whatever might happen. A terrible groaning was heard during the night, and at dawn of day, Thor went out and observed lying near him a man of enormous bulk, who slept and snored pretty loudly. Thor could now account for the noise they had heard over night, and girding on his Belt of Prowess, increased that divine strength which he now stood in need of. The giant awakening, rose up, and it is said that for once in his life Thor was afraid to make use of his mallet, and contented himself by simply asking the giant his name.

"My name is Skrymir, said the other, 'but I need not ask thy name, for I know thou art the God Thor. But what hast thou done with my glove?' And stretching out his hand Skrymir picked up his glove, which Thor then perceived was what they had taken over night for a hall, the chamber where they had sought refuge being the thumb. Skrymir then asked whether they would have his fellowship, and Thor consenting, the giant opened his wallet and began to eat his breakfast. Thor and his companions having also taken their morning repast, though in another place, Skrymir proposed that they should lay their provisions together, which Thor also assented to. The giant then put all the meat into one wallet, which he slung on his back and went before them, taking tremendous strides, the whole day, and at dusk sought out for them a place where they might pass the night under a large oak tree. Skrymir then told them that he would lie down to sleep. 'But take ye the wallet,' he added, 'and prepare your supper.'

"Skrymir soon fell asleep, and began to snore strongly, but incredible though it may appear, it must nevertheless be told, that when Thor came to open the wallet he could not untie a single knot, nor render a single string looser than it was before. Seeing that his labour was in vain, Thor became wroth, and grasping his mallet with both hands while he advanced a step forward, launched it at the giant's head. Skrymir, awakening, merely asked whether a leaf had not fallen on his head, and whether they had supped and were ready to go to sleep. Thor answered that they were just going to sleep, and so saying, went and laid himself down under another oak tree. But sleep came not that night to Thor, and when he remarked that Skrymir snored again so loud that the forest re-echoed with the noise, he arose, and grasping his mallet, launched it with such force that it sunk into the giant's skull up to the handle. Skrymir awakening, cried out—

"What's the matter? did an acorn fall on my head? How fares it with thee, Thor?"

"But Thor went away hastily, saying that he had just then awoken, and that as it was only midnight there was still time for sleep. He however resolved that if he had an opportunity of striking a third blow, it should settle all matters between them. A little

before daybreak he perceived that Skrymir was again fast asleep, and again grasping his mallet, dashed it with such violence that it forced its way into the giant's cheek up to the handle. But Skrymir sat up, and stroking his cheek, said—

"Are there any birds perched on this tree? Methought when I awoke some moss from the branches fell on my head. What! Art thou awake, Thor? Methinks it is time for us to get up and dress ourselves; but you have not now a long way before you to the city called Utgard. I have heard you whispering to one another that I am not a man of small dimensions; but if you come into Utgard you will see there many men much taller than myself. Wherefore I advise you, when you come there, not to make too much of yourselves, for the followers of Utgard-Loki will not brook the boasting of such mannikins as ye are. The best thing you could do would probably be to turn back again, but if you persist in going on, take the road that leads eastward, for mine now lies northward to those rocks which you may see in the distance.'

"Hereupon, he threw his wallet over his shoulders and turned away from them, into the forest, and I could never hear that Thor wished to meet with him a second time.

47. "Thor and his companions proceeded on their way, and towards noon descried a city standing in the middle of a plain. It was so lofty that they were obliged to bend their necks quite back on their shoulders ere they could see to the top of it. On arriving at the walls they found the gateway closed with a gate of bars strongly locked and bolted. Thor, after trying in vain to open it, crept with his companions through the bars, and thus succeeded in gaining admission into the city. Seeing a large palace before them, with the door wide open, they went in and found a number of men of prodigious stature sitting on benches in the hall. Going further, they came before the king, Utgard-Loki, whom they saluted with great respect. Their salutations were however returned by a contemptuous look from the king, who, after regarding them for some time, said with a scornful smile—

"It is tedious to ask for tidings of a long journey, yet if I do not mistake me, that stripling there must be Aku-Thor. Perhaps,' he added, addressing himself to Thor, 'thou mayst be taller than thou appearest to be. But what are the feats that thou and thy fellows deem yourselves skilled in, for no one is permitted to remain here who does not, in some feat or other, excel all other men.'

"The feat I know,' replied Loki, 'is to eat quicker than any one else, and in this I am ready to give a proof against any one here who may choose to compete with me.'

"That will indeed be a feat,' said Utgard-Loki, 'if thou performest what thou promistest, and it shall be tried forthwith.'

"He then ordered one of his men, who was sitting at the further end of the bench, and whose name was Logi, to come forward and try his skill with Loki. A trough filled with flesh meat having been set on the hall floor, Loki placed himself at one end, and Logi at the other, and each of them, began to eat as fast as he could, until they met in the middle of the trough. But it was found that Loki had only eaten the flesh, whereas his adversary had devoured both flesh and bone, and the trough to boot. All the company therefore adjudged that Loki was vanquished.

"Utgard-Loki then asked what feat the young man who accompanied Thor could perform. Thjalfi answered that he would run a race with any one who might be matched against him. The king observed that skill in running was something to boast of, but that if the youth would win the match he must display great agility. He then arose and went with all who were present to a plain where there was a good ground for running on, and calling a young man named Hugi, bade him run a match with Thjalfi. In the first course Hugi so much outstripped his competitor that he turned back and met him not far from the starting-place.

"Thou must ply thy legs better, Thjalfi,' said Utgard-Loki, 'if thou wilt win the match, though I must needs say that there never came a man here swifter of foot than thou art.'

"In the second course, Thjalfi was a full bow-shot from the goal when Hugi arrived at it.

"Most bravely dost thou run, Thjalfi,' said Utgard-Loki, 'though thou wilt not, methinks, win the match. But the third, course must decide.'

"They accordingly ran a third time, but Hugi had already reached the goal before Thjalfi had got half way. All who were present then cried out that there had been a sufficient trial of skill in this kind of exercise.

50. "Utgard-Loki then asked Thor in what feats he would choose to give proofs of that dexterity for which he was so famous. Thor replied, that he would begin a drinking match with any one. Utgard-Loki consented, and entering the palace, bade his cupbearer bring the large horn which his followers were obliged to drink out of when they had trespassed in any way against established usage. The cupbearer having presented it to Thor, Utgard-Loki said—

"Whoever is a good drinker will empty that horn at a single draught, though some men make two of it, but the most puny drinker of all can do it at three.'

"Thor looked at the horn, which seemed of no extraordinary size, though somewhat long; however, as he was very thirsty, he set it to his lips, and without drawing breath pulled as long and as deeply as he could, that he might not be obliged to make a second draught of it; but when he set the horn down and looked in, he could scarcely perceive that the liquor was diminished.

"'Tis well drunken,' exclaimed Utgard-Loki, 'though nothing much to boast of; and I would not have believed had it been told me that Asa-Thor could not have taken a greater draught, but thou no doubt meanest to make amends at the second pull.'

"Thor, without answering, went to it again with all his might, but when he took the horn from his mouth it seemed to him as if he had drunk rather less than before, although the horn could now be carried without spilling.

"How now, Thor,' said Utgard-Loki; 'thou must not spare thyself more in performing a feat than befits thy skill; but if thou meanest to drain the horn at the third draught thou must pull deeply; and I must needs say that thou wilt not be called so mighty a man here as thou art among the Æsir, if thou showest no greater prowess in other feats than, methinks, will be shown in this.'

"Thor, full of wrath, again set the horn to his lips, and exerted himself to the utmost to empty it entirely, but on looking in found that the liquor was only a little lower, upon which he resolved to make no further attempt, but gave back the horn to the cupbearer.

51. "I now see plainly,' said Utgard-Loki, 'that thou are not quite so stout as we thought thee, but wilt thou try any other feat, though, methinks, thou art not likely to bear any prize away with thee hence.'

"I will try another feat,' replied Thor, 'and I am sure such draughts as I have been drinking would not have been reckoned small among the Æsir; but what new trial hast thou to propose?'

"We have a very, trifling game here,' answered Utgard-Loki, 'in which we exercise none but children. It consists in merely lifting my cat from the ground, nor should I have dared to mention such a feat to Asa-Thor if I had not already observed that thou art by no means what we took thee for.'

"As he finished speaking, a large grey cat sprang on the hall floor. Thor advancing put his hand under the cat's belly, and did his utmost to raise him from the floor, but the cat bending his back had, notwithstanding all Thor's efforts, only one of his feet lifted up, seeing which, Thor made no further attempt.

"This trial has turned out,' said Utgard-Loki, 'just as I imagined it would; the cat is large, but Thor is little in comparison to our men.'

"Little as ye call me,' answered Thor, 'let me see who amongst you will come hither now I am in wrath, and wrestle with me.'

"I see no one here,' said Utgard-Loki, looking at the men sitting on the benches, 'who would not think it beneath him to wrestle with thee; let somebody, however, call hither that old crone, my nurse Elli, and let Thor wrestle with her if he will. She has thrown to the ground many a man not less strong and mighty than this Thor is.'

53. "A toothless old woman then entered the hall, and was told by Utgard-Loki to take hold of Thor. The tale is shortly told. The more Thor tightened his hold on the crone the firmer she stood. At length, after a very violent struggle, Thor began to lose his footing, and was finally brought down upon one knee. Utgard-Loki then told them to desist, adding that Thor had now no occasion to ask

any one else in the hall to wrestle with him, and it was also getting late. He therefore showed Thor and his companions to their seats, and they passed the night there in good cheer.

54. "The next morning, at break of day, Thor and his companions dressed themselves and prepared for their departure. Utgard-Loki then came and ordered a table to be set for them, on which there was no lack either of victuals or drink. After the repast Utgard-Loki led them to the gate of the city, and, on parting, asked Thor how he thought his journey had turned out, and whether he had met with any men stronger than himself. Thor told him that he could not deny but that he had brought great shame on himself. 'And what grieves me most,' he added, 'is that ye will call me a man of little worth.'

55. "'Nay,' said Utgard-Loki, 'it behooves me to tell thee the truth now that thou art out of the city which so long as I live, and have my way, thou shalt never re-enter. And by my troth, had I known beforehand that thou hadst so much strength in thee, and wouldst have brought me so near to a great mishap, I would not have suffered thee to enter this time. Know then that I have all along deceived thee by my illusions; first, in the forest, where I arrived before thee, and there thou wert not able to untie the wallet, because I had bound it with iron wire, in such a manner that thou couldst not discover how the knot ought to be loosened. After this, thou gavest me three blows with thy mallet; the first, though the least, would have ended my days had it fallen on me, but I brought a rocky mountain before me which thou didst not perceive, and in this mountain thou wilt find three glens, one of them remarkably deep. These are the dints made by thy mallet. I have made use of similar illusions in the contests ye have had with my followers. In the first, Loki, like hunger itself, devoured all that was set before him, but Logi was, in reality, nothing else than ardent fire, and therefore consumed not only the meat but the trough which held it. Hugi, with whom Thjalfi contended in running, was Thought, and it was impossible for Thjalfi to keep pace with that. When thou, in thy turn, didst try to empty the horn, thou didst perform, by my troth, a deed so marvellous, that had I not seen it myself I should never have believed it. For one end of that horn reached the sea, which thou wast not aware of, but when thou comest to the shore thou wilt perceive how much the sea has sunk by thy draughts, which have caused what is now called the ebb. Thou didst perform a feat no less wonderful by lifting up the cat, and to tell thee the truth, when we saw that one of his paws was off the floor, we were all of us terror-stricken, for what thou tookest for a cat was in reality the great Midgard serpent that encompassed the whole earth, and he was then barely long enough to inclose it between his head and tail, so high had thy hand raised him up towards heaven. Thy wrestling with Elli was also a most astonishing feat, for there was never yet a man, nor ever shall be, whom Old Age, for such in fact was Elli, will not sooner or later lay low if he abide her coming. But now as we are going to part, let me tell thee that it will be better for both of us if thou never come near me again, for shouldst thou do so, I shall again defend myself by other illusions, so that thou wilt never prevail against me.'

"On hearing these words, Thor, in a rage, laid hold of his mallet and would have launched it at him, but Utgard-Loki had disappeared, and when Thor would have returned to the city to destroy it, he found nothing around him but a verdant plain. Proceeding, therefore, on his way, he returned without stopping to Thrudvang. But he had already resolved to make that attack on the Midgard serpent which afterwards took place. I trust," concluded Thridi, "that thou wilt now acknowledge that no one can tell thee truer tidings than those thou hast heard respecting this journey of Thor to Jotunheim."

HOW THOR WENT TO FISH FOR THE MIDGARD SERPENT.

56. "I find by your account," said Gangler, "that Utgard-Loki possesses great might in himself, though he has recourse to spells and illusions; but his power may be seen by his followers, being in every respect so skillful and dexterous. But tell me, did Thor ever avenge this affront?"

"It is not unknown," replied Har, "though nobody has talked of

it, that Thor was determined to make amends for the journey just spoken of, and he had not been long at home ere he set out again so hastily that he had neither his car nor his goats, nor any followers with him. He went out of Midgard under the semblance of a young man, and came at dusk to the dwelling of a giant called Hymir. Here Thor passed the night, but at break of day, when he perceived that Hymir was making his boat ready for fishing, he arose and dressed himself, and begged the giant would let him row out to sea with him. Hymir answered, that a puny stripling like he was could be of no great use to him. 'Besides,' he added, 'thou wilt catch thy death of cold if I go so far out and remain so long as I am accustomed to do.' Thor said, that for all that, he would row as far from the land as Hymir had a mind, and was not sure which of them would be the first who might wish to row back again. At the same time he was so enraged that he felt sorely inclined to let his mallet ring on the giant's skull without further delay, but intending to try his strength elsewhere, he stifled his wrath, and asked Hymir what he meant to bait with. Hymir told him to look out for a bait himself. Thor instantly went up to a herd of oxen that belonged to the giant, and seizing the largest bull, that bore the name of Himinbjot, wrung off his head, and returning with it to the boat, put out to sea with Hymir. Thor rowed aft with two oars, and with such force that Hymir, who rowed at the prow, saw with surprise, how swiftly the boat was driven forward. He then observed that they were come to the place where he was wont to angle for flat fish, but Thor assured him that they had better go on a good way further. They accordingly continued to ply their oars, until Hymir cried out that if they did not stop they would be in danger from the great Midgard serpent. Notwithstanding this, Thor persisted in rowing further, and in spite of Hymir's remonstrances was a great while before he would lay down his oars. He then took out a fishing-line, extremely strong, furnished with an equally strong hook, on which he fixed the bull's head, and cast his line into the sea. The bait soon reached the bottom, and it may be truly said that Thor then deceived the Midgard serpent not a whit less than Utgard-Loki had deceived Thor when he obliged him to lift up the serpent in his hand: for the monster greedily caught at the bait, and the hook stuck fast in his palate. Stung with the pain, the serpent tugged at the hook so violently, that Thor was obliged to hold fast with both hands by the pegs that bear against the oars. But his wrath now waxed high, and assuming all his divine power, he pulled so hard at the line that his feet forced their way through the boat and went down to the bottom of the sea, whilst with his hands he drew up the serpent to the side of the vessel. It is impossible to express by words the dreadful scene that now took place. Thor, on one hand, darting looks of ire on the serpent, whilst the monster, rearing his head, spouted out floods of venom upon him. It is said that when the giant Hymir beheld the serpent, he turned pale and trembled with fright and seeing, moreover, that the water was entering his boat on all sides, he took out his knife, just as Thor raised his mallet aloft, and cut the line, on which the serpent sunk again under the water. Thor, however, launched his mallet at him, and there are some who say that it struck off the monster's head at the bottom of the sea, but one may assert with more certainty that he still lives and lies in the ocean. Thor then struck Hymir such a blow with his fist, nigh the ear, that the giant fell headlong into the water, and Thor, wading with rapid strides, soon came to the land again."

THE DEATH OF BALDUR THE GOOD.

57. "Verily," said Gangler, "it was a famous exploit which Thor performed on that journey, but did any other such events take place among the Æsir?"

"Ay," replied Har, "I can tell thee of another event which the Æsir deemed of much greater importance. Thou must know, therefore, that Baldur the Good having been tormented with terrible dreams, indicating that his life was in great peril, communicated them to the assembled Æsir, who resolved to conjure all things to avert from him the threatened danger. Then Frigga exacted an oath from fire and water, from iron, and all other metals, as well as from stones, earths, diseases, beasts, birds, poisons, and creeping things, that none of them would do any harm to Baldur. When

this was done, it became a favourite pastime of the Æsir, at their meetings, to get Baldur to stand up and serve them as a mark, some hurling darts at him, some stones, while others hewed at him with their swords and battle-axes, for do they what they would none of them could harm him, and this was regarded by all as a great honour shown to Baldur. But when Loki, the son of Laufey, beheld the scene, he was sorely vexed that Baldur was not hurt. Assuming, therefore, the shape of a woman, he went to Fensalir, the mansion of Frigga. That goddess, when she saw the pretended woman, inquired of her if she knew what the Æsir were doing at their meetings. She replied, that they were throwing darts and stones at Baldur without being able to hurt him.

"Ay," said Frigga, 'neither metal nor wood can hurt Baldur, for I have exacted an oath from all of them.'

"What!" exclaimed the woman, 'have all things sworn to spare Baldur?'

"All things," replied Frigga, 'except one little shrub that grows on the eastern side of Valhalla, and is called Mistletoe, and which I thought too young and feeble to crave an oath from.'

"As soon as Loki heard this he went away, and, resuming his natural shape, cut off the mistletoe, and repaired to the place where the gods were assembled. There he found Hodur standing apart, without partaking of the sports, on account of his blindness, and going up to him, said, 'Why dost thou not also throw something at Baldur?'

"Because I am blind," answered Hodur, 'and see not where Baldur is, and have, moreover, nothing to throw with.'

"Come then," said Loki, 'do like the rest, and show honour to Baldur by throwing this twig at him, and I will direct thy arm, toward the place where he stands.'

58. "Hodur then took the mistletoe, and under the guidance of Loki, darted it at Baldur, who, pierced through and through, fell down lifeless. Surely never was there witnessed, either among gods or men, a more atrocious deed than this! When Baldur fell the Æsir were struck speechless with horror, and then they looked at each other, and all were of one mind to lay hands on him who had done the deed, but they were obliged to delay their vengeance out of respect for the sacred place (Peace-stead) where they were assembled. They at length gave vent to their grief by loud lamentations, though not one of them could find words to express the poignancy of his feelings. Odin, especially, was more sensible than the others of the loss they had suffered, for he foresaw what a detriment Baldur's death would be to the Æsir. When the gods came to themselves, Frigga asked who among them wished to gain all her love and good will; 'For this,' said she, 'shall he have who will ride to Hel and try to find Baldur, and offer Hela a ransom if she will let him return to Asgard; whereupon Hermod, surnamed the Nimble, the son of Odin, offered to undertake the journey. Odin's horse Sleipnir was then led forth, on which Hermod mounted, and galloped away on his mission.

59. "The Æsir then took the dead body and bore it to the seashore, where stood Baldur's ship Hringhorn, which passed for the largest in the world. But when they wanted to launch it in order to make Baldur's funeral pile on it, they were unable to make it stir. In this conjuncture they sent to Jotunheim for a certain giantess named Hyrrokin, who came mounted on a wolf, having twisted serpents for a bridle. As soon as she alighted, Odin ordered four Berserks to hold her steed fast, who were, however, obliged to throw the animal on the ground ere they could effect their purpose. Hyrrokin then went to the ship, and with a single push set it afloat, but the motion was so violent that the fire sparkled from the rollers, and the earth shook all around. Thor, enraged at the sight, grasped his mallet, and but for the interference of the Æsir would have broken the woman's skull. Baldur's body was then borne to the funeral pile on board the ship, and this ceremony had such an effect on Nanna, the daughter of Nep, that her heart broke with grief, and her body was burnt on the same pile with her husband's. Thor then stood up and hallowed the pile with Mjøltnir, and during the ceremony kicked a dwarf named Litur, who was running before his feet, into the fire. There was a vast concourse of various kinds of people at Baldur's obsequies. First came Odin, accompanied by Frigga, the Valkyrs and his ravens; then Frey in his car drawn by a boar named Gullinbursti or Slidrugtanni; Heim-

dall rode his horse called Gulltopp, and Freyja drove in her chariot drawn by cats. There were also a great many Frost-giants and giants of the mountains present. Odin laid on the pile the gold ring called Draupnir, which afterwards acquired the property of producing every ninth night eight rings of equal weight. Baldur's horse was led to the pile fully caparisoned, and consumed in the same flames on the body of his master.

BALDUR IN THE ABODE OF THE DEAD

60. "Meanwhile, Hermod was proceeding on his mission. For the space of nine days, and as many nights, he rode through deep glens so dark that he could not discern anything until he arrived at the river Gjoll, which he passed over on a bridge covered with glittering gold. Modgudur, the maiden who kept the bridge, asked him his name and lineage, telling him that the day before five bands of dead persons had ridden over the bridge, and did not shake it so much as he alone. 'But,' she added, 'thou hast not death's hue on thee, why then ridest thou here on the way to Hel?'

"I ride to Hel," answered Hermod, 'to seek Baldur. Hast thou perchance seen him pass this way?'

"Baldur," she replied, 'hath ridden over Gjoll's bridge, but there below, towards the north, lies the way to the abodes of death.'

"Hermod then pursued his journey until he came to the barred gates of Hel. Here he alighted, girthed his saddle tighter, and remounting, clapped both spurs to his horse, who cleared the gate by a tremendous leap without touching it. Hermod then rode on to the palace, where he found his brother Baldur occupying the most distinguished seat in the hall, and passed the night in his company. The next morning he besought Hela (Death) to let Baldur ride home with him, assuring her that nothing but lamentations were to be heard among the gods. Hela answered that it should now be tried whether Baldur was so beloved as he was said to be.

"If therefore," she added, 'all things in the world, both living and lifeless, weep for him, then shall he return to the Æsir, but if any one thing speak against him or refuse to weep, he shall be kept in Hel.'

"Hermod then rose, and Baldur led him out of the hall and gave him the ring Draupnir, to present as a keepsake to Odin. Nanna also sent Frigga a linen cassock and other gifts, and to Fulla a gold finger-ring. Hermod then rode back to Asgard, and gave an account of all he had heard and witnessed.

"The gods upon this dispatched messengers throughout the world, to beg everything to weep, in order that Baldur might be delivered from Hel. All things very willingly complied with this request, both men and every other living being, as well as earths and stones, and trees and metals, just as thou must have seen these things weep when they are brought from a cold place into a hot one. As the messengers were returning with the conviction that their mission had been quite successful, they found an old hag named Thaukt sitting in a cavern, and begged her to weep Baldur out of Hel.

"It was strongly suspected that this hag was no other than Loki himself who never ceased to work evil among the Æsir."

THE FLIGHT AND PUNISHMENT OF LOKI.

61. "Evil are the deeds of Loki truly," said Gangler; "first of all in his having caused Baldur to be slain, and then preventing him from being delivered out of Hel. But was he not punished for these crimes?"

"Ay," replied Har, "and in such a manner that he will long repent having committed them. When he perceived how exasperated the gods were, he fled and hid himself in the mountains. There he built him a dwelling with four doors, so that he could see everything that passed around him. Often in the daytime he assumed the likeness of a salmon, and concealed himself under the waters of a cascade called Franangursfors, where he employed himself in divining and circumventing whatever stratagems the Æsir might have recourse to in order to catch him. One day, as he sat in his dwelling, he took flax and yarn, and worked them into meshes in the manner that nets have since been made by fishermen. Odin, however, had descried his retreat out of Hlidskjalf, and Loki be-

coming aware that the gods were approaching, threw his net into the fire, and ran to conceal himself in the river. When the gods entered the house, Kvasir, who was the most distinguished among them all for his quickness and penetration, traced out in the hot embers the vestiges of the net which had been burnt, and told Odin that it must be an invention to catch fish. Whereupon they set to work and wove a net after the model they saw imprinted in the ashes. This net, when finished, they threw into the river in which Loki had hidden himself. Thor held one end of the net, and all the other gods laid hold of the other end, thus jointly drawing it along the stream. Notwithstanding all their precautions the net passed over Loki, who had crept between two stones, and the gods only perceived that some living thing had touched the meshes. They therefore cast their net a second time, hanging so great a weight to it that it everywhere raked the bed of the river. But Loki, perceiving that he had but a short distance from the sea, swam onwards and leapt over the net into the waterfall. The Æsir instantly followed him, and divided themselves into two bands. Thor, wading along in mid-stream, followed the net, whilst the others dragged it along towards the sea. Loki then perceived that he had only two chances of escape, either to swim out to sea, or to leap again over the net. He chose the latter, but as he took a tremendous leap Thor caught him in his hand. Being, however, extremely slippery, he would have escaped had not Thor held him fast by the tail, and this is the reason why salmon have had their tails ever since so fine and thin.

"The gods having thus captured Loki, dragged him without commiseration into a cavern, wherein they placed three sharp-pointed rocks, boring a hole through each of them. Having also seized Loki's children, Vali and Nari, they changed the former into a wolf, and in this likeness he tore his brother to pieces and devoured him. The gods then made cords of his intestines, with which they bound Loki on the points of the rocks, one cord passing under his shoulders, another under his loins, and a third under his hams, and afterwards transformed these cords into thongs of iron. Skadi then suspended a serpent over him in such a manner that the venom should fall on his face, drop by drop. But Siguna, his wife, stands by him and receives the drops as they fall in a cup, which she empties as often as it is filled. But while she is doing this, venom falls upon Loki, which makes him howl with horror, and twist his body about so violently that the whole earth shakes, and this produces what men call earthquakes. There will Loki lie until Ragnarok."

OF RAGNAROK, OR THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS, AND THE CONFLAGRATION OF THE UNIVERSE.

63. "I have not heard before of Ragnarok," said Gangler; "what hast thou to tell me about it?"

"There are many very notable circumstances concerning it," replied Har, "which I can inform thee of. In the first place will come the winter, called Fimbul-winter, during which snow will fall from the four corners of the world; the frosts will be very severe, the wind piercing, the weather tempestuous, and the sun impart no gladness. Three such winters shall pass away without being tempered by a single summer. Three other similar winters follow, during which war and discord will spread over the whole globe. Brethren for the sake of mere gain shall kill each other, and no one shall spare either his parents or his children.

64. "Then shall happen such things as may truly be accounted great prodigies. The wolf shall devour the sun, and a severe loss will that be for mankind. The other wolf will take the moon, and this too will cause great mischief. Then the stars shall be hurled from the heavens, and the earth so violently shaken that trees will be torn up by the roots, the tottering mountains tumble headlong from their foundations, and all bonds and fetters be shivered in pieces. Fenrir then breaks loose, and the sea rushes over the earth, on account of the Midgard serpent turning with giant force, and gaining the land. On the waters floats the ship Naglfar, which is constructed of the nails of dead men. For which reason great care should be taken to die with pared nails, for he who dies with his nails unpared, supplies materials for the building of this vessel,

which both gods and men wish may be finished as late as possible. But in this flood shall Naglfar float, and the giant Hrym be its steersman.

"The wolf Fenrir advancing, opens his enormous mouth; the lower jaw reaches to the earth, and the upper one to heaven, and would in fact reach still farther were there space to admit of it. Fire flashes from his eyes and nostrils. The Midgard serpent, placing himself by the side of the wolf, vomits forth floods of poison which overwhelm the air and the waters. Amidst this devastation heaven is cleft in twain, and the sons of Muspell ride through the breach. Surtur rides first, and both before and behind him flames burning fire. His sword outshines the sun itself. Bifrost, as they ride over it, breaks to pieces. Then they direct their course to the battlefield called Vigrid. Thither also repair the wolf Fenrir and the Midgard serpent, and also Loki, with all the followers of Hel, and Hrym with all the Hrimthursar. But the sons of Muspell keep their effulgent bands apart on the field of battle, which is one hundred miles long on every side.

65. "Meanwhile Heimdall stands up, and with all his force sounds the Gjallar-horn to arouse the gods, who assemble without delay. Odin then rides to Mimir's well and consults Mimir how he and his warriors ought to enter into action. The ash Yggdrasill begins to shake, nor is there anything in heaven or earth exempt from fear at that terrible hour. The Æsir and all the heroes of Valhalla arm themselves and speed forth to the field, led on by Odin, with his golden helm and resplendent cuirass, and his spear called Gungnir. Odin places himself against the wolf Fenrir; Thor stands by his side, but can render him no assistance, having himself to combat with the Midgard serpent. Frey encounters Surtur, and terrible blows are exchanged ere Frey falls; and he owes his defeat to his not having that trusty sword he gave to Skirnir. That day the dog Garm, who had been chained in the Gnipa cave, breaks loose. He is the most fearful monster of all, and attacks Tyr, and they kill each other. Thor gains great renown for killing the Midgard serpent, but at the same time, recoiling nine paces, falls dead upon the spot suffocated by the floods of venom which the dying serpent vomits forth upon him. The wolf swallows Odin, but at that instant Vidar advances, and setting his foot on the monster's lower jaw, seizes the other with his hand, and thus tears and rends him till he dies. Vidar is able to do this because he wears those shoes for which stuff has been gathering in all ages, namely, the shreds of leather which are cut off to form the toes and heels of shoes, and it is on this account that those who would render a service to the Æsir should take care to throw such shreds away. Loki and Heimdall fight, and mutually kill each other.

"After this, Surtur darts fire and flame over the earth, and the whole universe is consumed."

OF THE ABODES OF FUTURE BLISS AND MISERY.

66. "What will remain," said Gangler, "after heaven and earth and the whole universe shall be consumed, and after all the gods, and the heroes of Valhalla, and all mankind shall have perished? For ye have already told me that every one shall continue to exist in some world or other, throughout eternity."

"There will be many abodes," replied Thridi, "some good, others bad. The best place of all to be in will be Gimli, in heaven, and all who delight in quaffing good drink will find a great store in the hall called Brimir, which is also in heaven in the region Okolni. There is also a fair hall of ruddy gold called Sindri, which stands on the mountains of Nida, (Nidafjöll). In those halls righteous and well-minded men shall abide. In Nastrond there is a vast and direful structure with doors that face the north. It is formed entirely of the backs of serpents, wattled together like wicker work. But the serpents' heads are turned towards the inside of the hall, and continually vomit forth floods of venom, in which wade all those who-commit murder, or who forswear themselves."

THE RENOVATION OF THE UNIVERSE.

67. "Will any of the gods survive, and will there be any longer a heaven and an earth?" demanded Gangler.

"There will arise out of the sea," replied Har, "another earth most lovely and verdant, with pleasant fields where the grain shall grow unsworn. Vidar and Vali shall survive; neither the flood nor Surtur's fire shall harm them. They shall dwell on the plain of Ida, where Asgard formerly stood. Thither shall come the sons of Thor, Modi and Magni, bringing with them their father's mallet Mjolnir. Baldur and Hodur shall also repair thither from the abode of death (Hel). There shall they sit and converse together, and call to mind their former knowledge and the perils they underwent, and the fight of the wolf Fenrir and the Midgard serpent. There too shall they find in the grass those golden tablets (orbs) which the Æsir once possessed. As it is said,—

There dwell Vidar and Vali
In the gods' holy seats,
When slaked Surtur's fire is
But Modi and Magni
Will Mjolnir possess,
And strife put an end to.

"Thou must know, moreover, that during the conflagration caused by Surtur's fire, a woman named Lif (Life), and a man named Lifthrasir, lie concealed in Hodmimir's forest. They shall feed on morning dew, and their descendants shall soon spread over the whole earth.

"But what thou wilt deem more wonderful is, that the sun shall have brought forth a daughter more lovely than herself, who shall go in the same track formerly trodden by her mother.

"And now," continued Thridi, "if thou hast any further questions to ask, I know not who can answer thee, for I never heard tell of any one who could relate what will happen in the other ages of the world. Make, therefore, the best use thou canst of what has been imparted to thee."

Upon this Gangler heard a terrible noise all around him: he looked everywhere, but could see neither palace nor city, nor anything save a vast plain. He therefore set out on his return to his own kingdom, where he related all that he had seen and heard, and ever since that time these tidings have been handed down by oral tradition.

ÆGIR'S JOURNEY TO ASGARD.

68. Ægir, who was well skilled in magic, once went to Asgard, where he met with a very good reception. Supper time being come, the twelve mighty Æsir—Odin, Thor, Njord, Frey, Tyr, Heimdall, Bragi, Vidar, Vali, Ullur, Hoenir and Forseti, together with the Asynjor,—Frigga, Freyja, Gefjon, Iduna, Gerda, Siguna, Fulla and Nanna, seated themselves on their lofty doom seats, in a hall around which were ranged swords of such surpassing brilliancy that no other light was requisite. They continued long at table, drinking mead of a very superior quality. While they were emptying their capacious drinking horns, Ægir, who sat next to Bragi, requested him to relate something concerning the Æsir. Bragi instantly complied with his request, by informing him of what had happened to Iduna.

IDUNA AND HER APPLES.

69. "Once," he said, "when Odin, Loki, and Hoenir went on a journey, they came to a valley where a herd of oxen were grazing, and being sadly in want of provisions did not scruple to kill one for their supper. Vain, however, were their efforts to boil the flesh; they found it, every time they took off the lid of the kettle, as raw as when first put in. While they were endeavouring to account for this singular circumstance a noise was heard above them, and on looking up they beheld an enormous eagle perched on the branch of an oak tree. 'If ye are willing to let me have my share of the flesh,' said the eagle, 'it shall soon be boiled;' and on their assenting to this proposal, it flew down and snatched up a leg and two shoulders of the ox—a proceeding which so incensed Loki, that he laid hold of a large stock, and made it fall pretty heavily on the eagle's back. It was, however, not an eagle that Loki struck, but the renowned giant Thjassi, clad in his eagle plumage. Loki soon found this out to his cost, for while one end of the stock stuck fast to the eagle's back, he was unable to let go his hold of the other end, and was consequently trailed by the eagle-clad giant over rocks and forests, until he was almost torn to pieces. Loki in this

predicament began to sue for peace, but Thjassi told him that he should never be released from his hold until he bound himself by a solemn oath to bring Iduna and her apples out of Asgard. Loki very willingly gave his oath to effect this object, and went back in a piteous plight to his companions.

70. "On his return to Asgard, Loki told Iduna that, in a forest at a short distance from the celestial residence, he had found apples growing which he thought were of a much better quality than her own, and that at all events it was worth while making a comparison between them. Iduna, deceived by his words, took her apples, and went with him into the forest, but they had no sooner entered it than Thjassi, clad in his eagle-plumage, flew rapidly towards them, and catching up Iduna, carried her treasure off with him to Jotunheim. The gods being thus deprived of their renovating apples, soon became wrinkled and grey; old age was creeping fast upon them, when they discovered that Loki had been, as usual, the contriver of all the mischief that had befallen them. They therefore threatened him with condign punishment if he did not instantly hit upon some expedient for bringing back Iduna and her apples to Asgard. Loki having borrowed from Freyja her falcon-plumage, flew to Jotunheim, and finding that Thjassi was out at sea fishing, lost no time in changing Iduna into a sparrow and flying off with her; but when Thjassi returned and became aware of what had happened, he donned his eagle-plumage, and flew after them. When the Æsir saw Loki approaching, holding Iduna transformed into a sparrow between his claws, and Thjassi with his outspread eagle wings ready to overtake him, they placed on the walls of Asgard bundles of chips, which they set fire to the instant that Loki had flown over them; and as Thjassi could not stop his flight, the fire caught his plumage, and he thus fell into the power of the Æsir, who slew him within the portals of the celestial residence. When these tidings came to Thjassi's daughter, Skadi, she put on her armour and went to Asgard, fully determined to avenge her father's death; but the Æsir having declared their willingness to atone for the deed, an amicable arrangement was entered into. Skadi was to choose a husband in Asgard, and the Æsir were to make her laugh, a feat which she flattered herself it would be impossible for any one to accomplish. Her choice of a husband was to be determined by a mere inspection of the feet of the gods, it being stipulated that the feet should be the only part of their persons visible until she had made known her determination. In inspecting the row of feet placed before her, Skadi took a fancy to a pair which she flattered herself, from their fine proportions, must be those of Baldur. They were however Njord's, and Njord was accordingly given her for a husband, and as Loki managed to make her laugh, by playing some diverting antics with a goat, the atonement was fully effected. It is even said that Odin did more than had been stipulated, by taking out Thjassi's eyes, and placing them to shine as stars in the firmament.

THE ORIGIN OF POETRY.

71. Ægir having expressed a wish to know how poetry originated, Bragi informed him that the Æsir and Vanir having met to put an end to the war which had long been carried on between them, a treaty of peace was agreed to and ratified by each party spitting into a jar. As a lasting sign of the amity which was thenceforward to subsist between the contending parties, the gods formed out of this spittle a being to whom they gave the name of Kvasir, and whom they endowed with such a high degree of intelligence that no one could ask him a question that he was unable to answer. Kvasir then traversed the whole world to teach men wisdom, but was at length treacherously murdered by the dwarfs, Fjalar and Galar, who, by mixing up his blood with honey, composed a liquor of such surpassing excellence that whoever drinks of it acquires the gift of song. When the Æsir inquired what had become of Kvasir, the dwarfs told them that he had been suffocated with his own wisdom, not being able to find any one who by proposing to him a sufficient number of learned questions might relieve him of its superabundance. Not long after this event, Fjalar and Galar managed to drown the giant Gilling and murder his wife, deeds which were avenged by their son Suttung taking the dwarfs out to sea, and placing them on a shoal which was flooded at high water.

In this critical position they implored Suttung to spare their lives, and accept the verse-inspiring beverage which they possessed as an atonement for their having killed his parents. Suttung having agreed to these conditions, released the dwarfs, and carrying the mead home with him, committed it to the care of his daughter Gunnlauth. Hence poetry is indifferently called Kvasir's blood, Suttung's mead, the dwarf's ransom, etc.

ODIN BEGUILLES THE DAUGHTER OF BAUGI

72. *Æsir* then asked how the gods obtained possession of so valuable a beverage, on which Bragi informed him that Odin being fully determined to acquire it, set out for Jotunheim, and after journeying for some time, came to a meadow in which nine thralls were mowing. Entering into conversation with them, Odin, offered to whet their scythes, an offer which they gladly accepted, and finding that the whetstone he made use of had given the scythes an extraordinary sharpness, asked him whether he was willing to dispose of it. Odin, however, threw the whetstone in the air, and in attempting to catch it as it fell, each thrall brought his scythe to bear on the neck of one of his comrades, so that they were all killed in the scramble. Odin took up his night's lodging at the house of Suttung's brother, Baugi, who told him that he was sadly at a loss for labourers, his nine thralls having slain each other. Odin, who went under the name of Baulverk, said that for a draught of Suttung's mead he would do the work of nine men for him. The terms agreed on, Odin worked for Baugi the whole summer, but Suttung was deaf to his brother's entreaties, and would not part with a drop of the precious liquor, which was carefully preserved in a cavern under his daughter's custody. Into this cavern Odin was resolved to penetrate. He therefore persuaded Baugi to bore a hole through the rock, which he had no sooner done than Odin, transforming himself into a worm, crept through the crevice, and resuming his natural shape, won the heart of Gunnlauth. After passing three nights with the fair maiden, he had no great difficulty in inducing her to let him take a draught out of each of the three jars, called Odhroerir, Bodn, and Son, in which the mead was kept. But wishing to make the most of his advantage, he pulled so deep that not a drop was left in the vessels. Transforming himself into an eagle, he then flew off as fast as his wings could carry him, but Suttung becoming aware of the stratagem, also took upon himself an eagle's guise, and flew after him. The *Æsir*, on seeing him approach Asgard, set out in the yard all the jars they could lay their hands on, which Odin filled by discharging through his beak the wonder-working liquor he had drunken. He was however, so near being caught by Suttung, that some of the liquor escaped him by an impure vent, and as no care was taken of this it fell to the share of the poetasters. But the liquor discharged in the jars was kept for the gods, and for those men who have sufficient wit to make a right use of it. Hence poetry is also called Odin's booty, Odin's gift, the beverage of the gods, &c. &c.

Snorri Sturluson: Heimskringla

PREFACE

In this book I have had old stories written down, as I have heard them told by intelligent people, concerning chiefs who have held dominion in the northern countries, and who spoke the Danish tongue; and also concerning some of their family branches, according to what has been told me. Some of this is found in ancient family registers, in which the pedigrees of kings and other personages of high birth are reckoned up, and part is written down after old songs and ballads which our forefathers had for their amusement. Now, although we cannot just say what truth there may be in these, yet we have the certainty that old and wise men held them to be true.

Thjodolf of Hvin was the skald of Harald Harfager, and he composed a poem for King Rognvald the Mountain-high, which is called "Ynglingatal." This Rognvald was a son of Olaf Geirstadalf, the brother of King Halfdan the Black. In this poem thirty of his forefathers are reckoned up, and the death and burial-place of each are given. He begins with Fjolner, a son of Yngvefrey, whom the Swedes, long after his time, worshipped and sacrificed to, and from whom the race or family of the Ynglings take their name.

Eyvind Skaldaspiller also reckoned up the ancestors of Earl Hakon the Great in a poem called "Haleygjatal", composed about Hakon; and therein he mentions Saeming, a son of Yngvefrey, and he likewise tells of the death and funeral rites of each. The lives and times of the Yngling race were written from Thjodolf's relation enlarged afterwards by the accounts of intelligent people.

As to funeral rites, the earliest age is called the Age of Burning; because all the dead were consumed by fire, and over their ashes were raised standing stones. But after Frey was buried under a cairn at Upsala, many chiefs raised cairns, as commonly as stones, to the memory of their relatives.

The Age of Cairns began properly in Denmark after Dan Milkilade had raised for himself a burial cairn, and ordered that he should be buried in it on his death, with his royal ornaments and armour, his horse and saddle-furniture, and other valuable goods; and many of his descendants followed his example. But the burning of the dead continued, long after that time, to be the custom of the Swedes and Northmen. Iceland was occupied in the time that Harald Harfager was the King of Norway. There were skalds in Harald's court whose poems the people know by heart even at the present day, together with all the songs about the kings who have ruled in Norway since his time; and we rest the foundations of our story principally upon the songs which were sung in the presence of the chiefs themselves or of their sons, and take all to be true that is found in such poems about their feats and battles; for although it be the fashion with skalds to praise most those in whose presence they are standing, yet no one would dare to relate to a chief what he, and all those who heard it, knew to be a false and imaginary, not a true account of his deeds; because that would be mockery, not praise.

OF THE PRIEST ARE FRODE

The priest Are Frode (the learned), a son of Thorgils the son of Geller, was the first man in this country who wrote down in the Norse language narratives of events both old and new. In the beginning of his book he wrote principally about the first settlements in Iceland, the laws and government, and next of the lagmen, and how long each had administered the law; and he reckoned the years at first, until the time when Christianity was intro-

duced into Iceland, and afterwards reckoned from that to his own times. To this he added many other subjects, such as the lives and times of kings of Norway and Denmark, and also of England; beside accounts of great events which have taken place in this country itself. His narratives are considered by many men of knowledge to be the most remarkable of all; because he was a man of good understanding, and so old that his birth was as far back as the year after Harald Sigurdson's fall. He wrote, as he himself says, the lives and times of the kings of Norway from the report of Od Kolson, a grandson of Hal of Sida. Od again took his information from Thorgeir Afradskol, who was an intelligent man, and so old that when Earl Hakon the Great was killed he was dwelling at Nidarnes—the same place at which King Olaf Trygvason afterwards laid the foundation of the merchant town of Nidaros (i.e., Throndhjem) which is now there. The priest Are came, when seven years old, to Haukadal to Hal Thorarinson, and was there fourteen years. Hal was a man of great knowledge and of excellent memory; and he could even remember being baptized, when he was three years old, by the priest Thanghrand, the year before Christianity was established by law in Iceland. Are was twelve years of age when Bishop Isleif died, and at his death eighty years had elapsed since the fall of Olaf Trygvason. Hal died nine years later than Bishop Isleif, and had attained nearly the age of ninety-four years. Hal had traded between the two countries, and had enjoyed intercourse with King Olaf the Saint, by which he had gained greatly in reputation, and he had become well acquainted with the kingdom of Norway. He had fixed his residence in Haukadal when he was thirty years of age, and he had dwelt there sixty-four years, as Are tells us. Teit, a son of Bishop Isleif, was fostered in the house of Hal at Haukadal, and afterwards dwelt there himself. He taught Are the priest, and gave him information about many circumstances which Are afterwards wrote down. Are also got many a piece of information from Thurid, a daughter of the gode Snorre. She was wise and intelligent, and remembered her father Snorre, who was nearly thirty-five years of age when Christianity was introduced into Iceland, and died a year after King Olaf the Saint's fall. So it is not wonderful that Are the priest had good information about ancient events both here in Iceland, and abroad, being a man anxious for information, intelligent and of excellent memory, and having besides learned much from old intelligent persons. But the songs seem to me most reliable if they are sung correctly, and judiciously interpreted.

HALFDAN THE BLACK SAGA.

1. HALFDAN FIGHTS WITH GANDALF AND SIGTRYG.

Halfdan was a year old when his father was killed, and his mother Asa set off immediately with him westwards to Agder, and set herself there in the kingdom which her father Harald had possessed. Halfdan grew up there, and soon became stout and strong; and, by reason of his black hair, was called Halfdan the Black. When he was eighteen years old he took his kingdom in Agder, and went immediately to Vestfold, where he divided that kingdom, as before related, with his brother Olaf. The same autumn he went with an army to Vingulmark against King Gandalf. They had many battles, and sometimes one, sometimes the other gained the victory; but at last they agreed that Halfdan should have half of Vingul-

mark, as his father Gudrod had had it before. Then King Halfdan proceeded to Raumarike, and subdued it. King Sigtryg, son of King Eystein, who then had his residence in Hedemark, and who had subdued Raumarike before, having heard of this, came out with his army against King Halfdan, and there was great battle, in which King Halfdan was victorious; and just as King Sigtryg and his troops were turning about to fly, an arrow struck him under the left arm, and he fell dead. Halfdan then laid the whole of Raumarike under his power. King Eystein's second son, King Sigtryg's brother, was also called Eystein, and was then king in Hedemark. As soon as Halfdan had returned to Vestfold, King Eystein went out with his army to Raumarike, and laid the whole country in subjection to him.

2. BATTLE BETWEEN HALFDAN AND EYSTEIN.

When King Halfdan heard of these disturbances in Raumarike, he again gathered his army together; and went out against King Eystein. A battle took place between them, and Halfdan gained the victory, and Eystein fled up to Hedemark, pursued by Halfdan. Another battle took place, in which Halfdan was again victorious; and Eystein fled northwards, up into the Dales to the herse Gudbrand. There he was strengthened with new people, and in winter he went towards Hedemark, and met Halfdan the Black upon a large island which lies in the Mjosen lake. There a great battle was fought, and many people on both sides were slain, but Halfdan won the victory. There fell Guthorm, the son of the herse Gudbrand, who was one of the finest men in the Uplands. Then Eystein fled north up the valley, and sent his relation Halvard Skalk to King Halfdan to beg for peace. On consideration of their relationship, King Halfdan gave King Eystein half of Hedemark, which he and his relations had held before; but kept to himself Thoten, and the district called Land. He likewise appropriated to himself Hadeland, and thus became a mighty king.

3. HALFDAN'S MARRIAGE

Halfdan the Black got a wife called Ragnhild, a daughter of Harald Gulskeg (Goldbeard), who was a king in Sogn. They had a son, to whom Harald gave his own name; and the boy was brought up in Sogn, by his mother's father, King Harald. Now when this Harald had lived out his days nearly, and was become weak, having no son, he gave his dominions to his daughter's son Harald, and gave him his title of king; and he died soon after. The same winter his daughter Ragnhild died; and the following spring the young Harald fell sick and died at ten years of age. As soon as Halfdan the Black heard of his son's death, he took the road northwards to Sogn with a great force, and was well received. He claimed the heritage and dominion after his son; and no opposition being made, he took the whole kingdom. Earl Atle Mjove (the Slender), who was a friend of King Halfdan, came to him from Gaular; and the king set him over the Sogn district, to judge in the country according to the country's laws, and collect scat upon the king's account. Thereafter King Halfdan proceeded to his kingdom in the Uplands.

4. HALFDAN'S STRIFE WITH GANDALF'S SONS.

In autumn, King Halfdan proceeded to Vingulmark. One night when he was there in guest quarters, it happened that about midnight a man came to him who had been on the watch on horseback, and told him a war force was come near to the house. The king instantly got up, ordered his men to arm themselves, and went out of the house and drew them up in battle order. At the same moment, Gandalf's sons, Hysing and Helsing, made their appearance with a large army. There was a great battle; but Halfdan being overpowered by the numbers of people fled to the forest, leaving many of his men on this spot. His foster-father, Olver Spake (the Wise), fell here. The people now came in swarms to King Halfdan, and he advanced to seek Gandalf's sons. They met at Eid, near Lake Oieren, and fought there. Hysing and Helsing fell, and their brother Hake saved himself by flight. King Halfdan

then took possession of the whole of Vingulmark, and Hake fled to Alfheimar.

5. HALFDAN'S MARRIAGE WITH HJORT'S DAUGHTER.

Sigurd Hjort was the name of a king in Ringerike, who was stouter and stronger than any other man, and his equal could not be seen for a handsome appearance. His father was Helge Hvasse (the Sharp); and his mother was Aslaug, a daughter of Sigurd the worm-eyed, who again was a son of Ragnar Lodbrok. It is told of Sigurd that when he was only twelve years old he killed in single combat the berserk Hildebrand, and eleven others of his comrades; and many are the deeds of manhood told of him in a long saga about his feats. Sigurd had two children, one of whom was a daughter, called Ragnhild, then twenty years of age, and an excellent brisk girl. Her brother Guthorm was a youth. It is related in regard to Sigurd's death that he had a custom of riding out quite alone in the uninhabited forest to hunt the wild beasts that are hurtful to man, and he was always very eager at this sport. One day he rode out into the forest as usual, and when he had ridden a long way he came out at a piece of cleared land near to Hadeland. There the berserk Hake came against him with thirty men, and they fought. Sigurd Hjort fell there, after killing twelve of Hake's men; and Hake himself lost one hand, and had three other wounds. Then Hake and his men rode to Sigurd's house, where they took his daughter Ragnhild and her brother Guthorm, and carried them, with much property and valuable articles, home to Hadeland, where Hake had many great farms. He ordered a feast to be prepared, intending to hold his wedding with Ragnhild; but the time passed on account of his wounds, which healed slowly; and the berserk Hake of Hadeland had to keep his bed, on account of his wounds, all the autumn and beginning of winter. Now King Halfdan was in Hedemark at the Yule entertainments when he heard this news; and one morning early, when the king was dressed, he called to him Harek Gand, and told him to go over to Hadeland, and bring him Ragnhild, Sigurd Hjort's daughter. Harek got ready with a hundred men, and made his journey so that they came over the lake to Hake's house in the grey of the morning, and beset all the doors and stairs of the places where the house-servants slept. Then they broke into the sleeping-room where Hake slept, took Ragnhild, with her brother Guthorm, and all the goods that were there, and set fire to the house-servants' place, and burnt all the people in it. Then they covered over a magnificent waggon, placed Ragnhild and Guthorm in it, and drove down upon the ice. Hake got up and went after them a while; but when he came to the ice on the lake, he turned his sword-hilt to the ground and let himself fall upon the point, so that the sword went through him. He was buried under a mound on the banks of the lake. When King Halfdan, who was very quick of sight, saw the party returning over the frozen lake, and with a covered waggon, he knew that their errand was accomplished according to his desire. Thereupon he ordered the tables to be set out, and sent people all round in the neighbourhood to invite plenty of guests; and the same day there was a good feast which was also Halfdan's marriage-feast with Ragnhild, who became a great queen. Ragnhild's mother was Thorny, a daughter of Klakharald king in Jutland, and a sister of Thrye Dannebod who was married to the Danish king, Gorm the Old, who then ruled over the Danish dominions.

6. OF RAGNHILD'S DREAM.

Ragnhild, who was wise and intelligent, dreamt great dreams. She dreamt, for one, that she was standing out in her herb-garden, and she took a thorn out of her shift; but while she was holding the thorn in her hand it grew so that it became a great tree, one end of which struck itself down into the earth, and it became firmly rooted; and the other end of the tree raised itself so high in the air that she could scarcely see over it, and it became also wonderfully thick. The under part of the tree was red with blood, but the stem upwards was beautifully green and the branches white as snow. There were many and great limbs to the tree, some high up, others low down; and so vast were the tree's branches that they seemed

to her to cover all Norway, and even much more.

7. OF HALFDAN'S DREAM.

King Halfdan never had dreams, which appeared to him an extraordinary circumstance; and he told it to a man called Thorleif Spake (the Wise), and asked him what his advice was about it. Thorleif said that what he himself did, when he wanted to have any revelation by dream, was to take his sleep in a swine-sty, and then it never failed that he had dreams. The king did so, and the following dream was revealed to him. He thought he had the most beautiful hair, which was all in ringlets; some so long as to fall upon the ground, some reaching to the middle of his legs, some to his knees, some to his loins or the middle of his sides, some to his neck, and some were only as knots springing from his head. These ringlets were of various colours; but one ringlet surpassed all the others in beauty, lustre, and size. This dream he told to Thorleif, who interpreted it thus:—There should be a great posterity from him, and his descendants should rule over countries with great, but not all with equally great, honour; but one of his race should be more celebrated than all the others. It was the opinion of people that this ringlet betokened King Olaf the Saint.

King Halfdan was a wise man, a man of truth and uprightness—who made laws, observed them himself, and obliged others to observe them. And that violence should not come in place of the laws, he himself fixed the number of criminal acts in law, and the compensations, mulcts, or penalties, for each case, according to every one's birth and dignity.

Queen Ragnhild gave birth to a son, and water was poured over him, and the name of Harald given him, and he soon grew stout and remarkably handsome. As he grew up he became very expert at all feats, and showed also a good understanding. He was much beloved by his mother, but less so by his father.

8. HALFDAN'S MEAT VANISHES AT A FEAST

King Halfdan was at a Yule-feast in Hadeland, where a wonderful thing happened one Yule evening. When the great number of guests assembled were going to sit down to table, all the meat and all the ale disappeared from the table. The king sat alone very confused in mind; all the others set off, each to his home, in consternation. That the king might come to some certainty about what had occasioned this event, he ordered a Fin to be seized who was particularly knowing, and tried to force him to disclose the truth; but however much he tortured the man, he got nothing out of him. The Fin sought help particularly from Harald, the king's son, and Harald begged for mercy for him, but in vain. Then Harald let him escape against the king's will, and accompanied the man himself. On their journey they came to a place where the man's chief had a great feast, and it appears they were well received there. When they had been there until spring, the chief said, "Thy father took it much amiss that in winter I took some provisions from him,—now I will repay it to thee by a joyful piece of news: thy father is dead; and now thou shalt return home, and take possession of the whole kingdom which he had, and with it thou shalt lay the whole kingdom of Norway under thee."

9. HALFDAN'S DEATH.

Halfdan the Black was driving from a feast in Hadeland, and it so happened that his road lay over the lake called Rand. It was in spring, and there was a great thaw. They drove across the bight called Rykinsvik, where in winter there had been a pond broken in the ice for cattle to drink at, and where the dung had fallen upon the ice the thaw had eaten it into holes. Now as the king drove over it the ice broke, and King Halfdan and many with him perished. He was then forty years old. He had been one of the most fortunate kings in respect of good seasons. The people thought so much of him, that when his death was known and his body was floated to Ringerike to bury it there, the people of most consequence from Raumarike, Vestfold, and Hedemark came to meet it. All desired to take the body with them to bury it in their own district, and they thought that those who got it would have good crops to expect. At last it was agreed to divide the body into four

parts. The head was laid in a mound at Stein in Ringerike, and each of the others took his part home and laid it in a mound; and these have since been called Halfdan's Mounds.

HARALD HARFAGER'S SAGA.

1. HARALD'S STRIFE WITH HAKE AND HIS FATHER GANDALF.

Harald was but ten years old when he succeeded his father (Halfdan the Black). He became a stout, strong, and comely man, and withal prudent and manly. His mother's brother, Guthorm, was leader of the hird, at the head of the government, and commander ('hertogi') of the army. After Halfdan the Black's death, many chiefs coveted the dominions he had left. Among these King Gandalf was the first; then Hogne and Frode, sons of Eystein, king of Hedemark; and also Hogne Karuson came from Ringerike. Hake, the son of Gandalf, began with an expedition of 300 men against Vestfold, marched by the main road through some valleys, and expected to come suddenly upon King Harald; while his father Gandalf sat at home with his army, and prepared to cross over the fiord into Vestfold. When Duke Guthorm heard of this he gathered an army, and marched up the country with King Harald against Hake. They met in a valley, in which they fought a great battle, and King Harald was victorious; and there fell King Hake and most of his people. The place has since been called Hakadale. Then King Harald and Duke Guthorm turned back, but they found King Gandalf had come to Vestfold. The two armies marched against each other, and met, and had a great battle; and it ended in King Gandalf flying, after leaving most of his men dead on the spot, and in that state he came back to his kingdom. Now when the sons of King Eystein in Hedemark heard the news, they expected the war would come upon them, and they sent a message to Hogne Karuson and to Herse Gudbrand, and appointed a meeting with them at Ringsaker in Hedemark.

2. KING HARALD OVERCOMES FIVE KINGS.

After the battle King Harald and Guthorm turned back, and went with all the men they could gather through the forests towards the Uplands. They found out where the Upland kings had appointed their meeting-place, and came there about the time of midnight, without the watchmen observing them until their army was before the door of the house in which Hogne Karuson was, as well as that in which Gudbrand slept. They set fire to both houses; but King Eystein's two sons slipped out with their men, and fought for a while, until both Hogne and Frode fell. After the fall of these four chiefs, King Harald, by his relation Guthorm's success and powers, subdued Hedemark, Ringerike, Gudbrandsdal, Hadeland, Thoten, Raumarike, and the whole northern part of Vingulmark. King Harald and Guthorm had thereafter war with King Gandalf, and fought several battles with him; and in the last of them King Gandalf was slain, and King Harald took the whole of his kingdom as far south as the river Raum.

3. OF GYDA, DAUGHTER OF EIRIE.

King Harald sent his men to a girl called Gyda, daughter of King Eirik of Hordaland, who was brought up as foster-child in the house of a great bonde in Valdres. The king wanted her for his concubine; for she was a remarkably handsome girl, but of high spirit withal. Now when the messengers came there, and delivered their errand to the girl, she answered, that she would not throw herself away even to take a king for her husband, who had no greater kingdom to rule over than a few districts. "And methinks," said she, "it is wonderful that no king here in Norway will make the whole country subject to him, in the same way as Gorm the Old did in Denmark, or Eirik at Upsala." The messengers thought her answer was dreadfully haughty, and asked what she thought would come of such an answer; for Harald was so mighty a man, that his invitation was good enough for her. But although she had replied to their errand differently from what they wished, they saw no chance, on this occasion, of taking her with them against her will; so they prepared to return. When they were ready, and

the people followed them out, Gyda said to the messengers, "Now tell to King Harald these my words. I will only agree to be his lawful wife upon the condition that he shall first, for my sake, subject to himself the whole of Norway, so that he may rule over that kingdom as freely and fully as King Eirik over the Swedish dominions, or King Gorm over Denmark; for only then, methinks, can he be called the king of a people."

4. KING HARALD'S VOW.

Now came the messengers back to King Harald, bringing him the words of the girl, and saying she was so bold and foolish that she well deserved that the king should send a greater troop of people for her, and inflict on her some disgrace. Then answered the king, "This girl has not spoken or done so much amiss that she should be punished, but rather she should be thanked for her words. She has reminded me," said he, "of something which it appears to me wonderful I did not think of before. And now," added he, "I make the solemn vow, and take God to witness, who made me and rules over all things, that never shall I clip or comb my hair until I have subdued the whole of Norway, with scat, and duties, and domains; or if not, have died in the attempt." Guthorm thanked the king warmly for his vow; adding, that it was royal work to fulfil royal words.

5. THE BATTLE IN ORKADAL.

After this the two relations gather together a great force, and prepare for an expedition to the Uplands, and northwards up the valley (Gudbrandsdal), and north over Dovrefjeld; and when the king came down to the inhabited land he ordered all the men to be killed, and everything wide around to be delivered to the flames. And when the people came to know this, they fled every one where he could; some down the country to Orkadal, some to Gaulardal, some to the forests. But some begged for peace, and obtained it, on condition of joining the king and becoming his men. He met no opposition until he came to Orkadal. There a crowd of people had assembled, and he had his first battle with a king called Gryting. Harald won the victory, and King Gryting was made prisoner, and most of his people killed. He took service himself under the king, and swore fidelity to him. Thereafter all the people in Orkadal district went under King Harald, and became his men.

6. KING HARALD S LAWS FOR LAND PROPERTY.

King Harald made this law over all the lands he conquered, that all the udal property should belong to him; and that the bondes, both great and small, should pay him land dues for their possessions. Over every district he set an earl to judge according to the law of the land and to justice, and also to collect the land dues and the fines; and for this each earl received a third part of the dues, and services, and fines, for the support of his table and other expenses. Each earl had under him four or more hereses, each of whom had an estate of twenty marks yearly income bestowed on him and was bound to support twenty men-at-arms, and the earl sixty men, at their own expenses. The king had increased the land dues and burdens so much, that each of his earls had greater power and income than the kings had before; and when that became known at Thronthjem, many great men joined the king and took his service.

7. BATTLE IN GAULARDAL.

It is told that Earl Hakon Grjotgardson came to King Harald from Yrjar, and brought a great crowd of men to his service. Then King Harald went into Gaulardal, and had a great battle, in which he slew two kings, and conquered their dominions; and these were Gaulardal district and Strind district. He gave Earl Hakon Strind district to rule over as earl. King Harald then proceeded to Stjoradal, and had a third battle, in which he gained the victory, and took that district also. There upon the Thronthjem people assembled, and four kings met together with their troops. The one ruled over Veradal, the second over Skaun, third over the Sparbyggja district, and the fourth over Eyin Idre (Inderoen); and this latter had also Eyna district. These four kings marched with their men against King Harald, but he won the battle; and some of these

kings fell, and some fled. In all, King Harald fought at the least eight battles, and slew eight kings, in the Thronthjem district, and laid the whole of it under him.

8. HARALD SEIZES NAUMUDAL DISTRICT.

North in Naumudal were two brothers, kings,—Herlaug and Hrollaug; and they had been for three summers raising a mound or tomb of stone and lime and of wood. Just as the work was finished, the brothers got the news that King Harald was coming upon them with his army. Then King Herlaug had a great quantity of meat and drink brought into the mound, and went into it himself, with eleven companions, and ordered the mound to be covered up. King Hrollaug, on the contrary, went upon the summit of the mound, on which the kings were wont to sit, and made a throne to be erected, upon which he seated himself. Then he ordered feather-beds to be laid upon the bench below, on which the earls were wont to be seated, and threw himself down from his high seat or throne into the earl's seat, giving himself the title of earl. Now Hrollaug went to meet King Harald, gave up to him his whole kingdom, offered to enter into his service, and told him his whole proceeding. Then took King Harald a sword, fastened it to Hrollaug's belt, bound a shield to his neck, and made him thereupon an earl, and led him to his earl's seat; and therewith gave him the district Naumudal, and set him as earl over it (A.D. 866).

9. KING HARALD'S HOME AFFAIRS.

King Harald then returned to Thronthjem, where he dwelt during the winter, and always afterwards called it his home. He fixed here his head residence, which is called Lade. This winter he took to wife Asa, a daughter of Earl Hakon Grjotgardson, who then stood in great favour and honour with the king. In spring the king fitted out his ships. In winter he had caused a great frigate (a dragon) to be built, and had it fitted-out in the most splendid way, and brought his house-troops and his berserks on board. The fore-castle men were picked men, for they had the king's banner. From the stem to the mid-hold was called rausn, or the fore-defence; and there were the berserks. Such men only were received into King Harald's house-troop as were remarkable for strength, courage, and all kinds of dexterity; and they alone got place in his ship, for he had a good choice of house-troops from the best men of every district. King Harald had a great army, many large ships, and many men of might followed him. Hornklofe, in his poem called "Glymdrapa", tells of this; and also that King Harald had a battle with the people of Orkadal, at Opdal forest, before he went upon this expedition.

O'er the broad heath the bowstrings twang,
While high in air the arrows sang.
The iron shower drives to flight
The foeman from the bloody fight.
The warder of great Odin's shrine,
The fair-haired son of Odin's line,
Raises the voice which gives the cheer,
First in the track of wolf or bear.
His master voice drives them along
To Hel—a destined, trembling throng;
And Nokve's ship, with glancing sides,
Must fly to the wild ocean's tides.—
Must fly before the king who leads
Norse axe-men on their ocean steeds.

10. BATTLE AT SOLSKEL

King Harald moved out with his army from Thronthjem, and went southwards to More. Hunthiof was the name of the king who ruled over the district of More. Solve Klofe was the name of his son, and both were great warriors. King Nokve, who ruled over Raumsdal, was the brother of Solve's mother. Those chiefs gathered a great force when they heard of King Harald, and came against him. They met at Solskel, and there was a great battle, which was gained by King Harald (A.D. 867). Hornklofe tells of this battle:—

Thus did the hero known to fame,
The leader of the shields, whose name
Strikes every heart with dire dismay,

Launch forth his war-ships to the fray.
Two kings he fought; but little strife
Was needed to cut short their life.
A clang of arms by the sea-shore,—
And the shields' sound was heard no more.

The two kings were slain, but Solve escaped by flight; and King Harald laid both districts under his power. He stayed here long in summer to establish law and order for the country people, and set men to rule them, and keep them faithful to him; and in autumn he prepared to return northwards to Throndhjem. Ragnvald Earl of More, a son of Eystein Glumra, had the summer before become one of Harald's men; and the king set him as chief over these two districts, North More and Raumsdal; strengthened him both with men of might and bondes, and gave him the help of ships to defend the coast against enemies. He was called Ragnvald the Mighty, or the Wise; and people say both names suited him well. King Harald came back to Throndhjem about winter.

11. FALL OF KINGS ARNVID AND AUBDJORN.

The following spring (A.D. 868) King Harald raised a great force in Throndhjem, and gave out that he would proceed to South More. Solve Klofe had passed the winter in his ships of war, plundering in North More, and had killed many of King Harald's men; pillaging some places, burning others, and making great ravage; but sometimes he had been, during the winter, with his friend King Arnvid in South More. Now when he heard that King Harald was come with ships and a great army, he gathered people, and was strong in men-at-arms; for many thought they had to take vengeance of King Harald. Solve Klofe went southwards to Firdafylke (the Fjord district), which King Audbjorn ruled over, to ask him to help, and join his force to King Arnvid's and his own. "For," said he, "it is now clear that we all have but one course to take; and that is to rise, all as one man, against King Harald, for we have strength enough, and fate must decide the victory; for as to the other condition of becoming his servants, that is no condition for us, who are not less noble than Harald. My father thought it better to fall in battle for his kingdom, than to go willingly into King Harald's service, or not to abide the chance of weapons like the Naumudal kings." King Solve's speech was such that King Audbjorn promised his help, and gathered a great force together and went with it to King Arnvid, and they had a great army. Now, they got news that King Harald was come from the north, and they met within Solskel. And it was the custom to lash the ships together, stem to stem; so it was done now. King Harald laid his ship against King Arnvid's, and there was the sharpest fight, and many men fell on both sides. At last King Harald was raging with anger, and went forward to the fore-deck, and slew so dreadfully that all the fore-castle men of Arnvid's ship were driven aft of the mast, and some fell. Thereupon Harald boarded the ship, and King Arnvid's men tried to save themselves by flight, and he himself was slain in his ship. King Audbjorn also fell; but Solve fled. So says Hornklofe:—

Against the hero's shield in vain
The arrow-storm fierce pours its rain.
The king stands on the blood-stained deck,
Trampling on many a stout foe's neck;
And high above the dinning stound
Of helm and axe, and ringing sound
Of blade and shield, and raven's cry,
Is heard his shout of 'Victory!'

Of King Harald's men, fell his earls Asgaut and Asbjorn, together with his brothers-in-law, Grjotgard and Herlaug, the sons of Earl Hakon of Lade. Solve became afterwards a great sea-king, and often did great damage in King Harald's dominions.

12. KING VEMUND BURNT TO DEATH.

After this battle (A.D. 868) King Harald subdued South More; but Vemund, King Audbjorn's brother, still had Firdafylke. It was now late in harvest, and King Harald's men gave him the counsel not to proceed south-wards round Stad. Then King Harald set Earl Ragnvald over South and North More and also Raumsdal, and he had many people about him. King Harald returned to Throndhjem. The same winter (A.D. 869) Ragnvald went over Eid, and

southwards to the Fjord district. There he heard news of King Vemund, and came by night to a place called Naustdal, where King Vemund was living in guest-quarters. Earl Ragnvald surrounded the house in which they were quartered, and burnt the king in it, together with ninety men. The came Berdlukare to Earl Ragnvald with a complete armed long-ship, and they both returned to More. The earl took all the ships Vemund had, and all the goods he could get hold of. Berdlukare proceeded north to Throndhjem to King Harald, and became his man; and dreadful berserk he was.

13. DEATH OF EARLS HAKON, AND ATLE MJOVE.

The following spring (A.D. 869) King Harald went southwards with his fleet along the coast, and subdued Firdafylke. Then he sailed eastward along the land until he came to Vik; but he left Earl Hakon Grjotgardson behind, and set him over the Fjord district. Earl Hakon sent word to Earl Atle Mjove that he should leave Sogn district, and be earl over Gaular district, as he had been before, alleging that King Harald had given Sogn district to him. Earl Atle sent word that he would keep both Sogn district and Gaular district, until he met King Harald. The two earls quarreled about this so long, that both gathered troops. They met at Fialar, in Stavanger fiord, and had a great battle, in which Earl Hakon fell, and Earl Atle got a mortal wound, and his men carried him to the island of Atley, where he died. So says Eyvind Skaldaspillir:—

He who stood a rooted oak,
Unshaken by the swordsmen's stroke,
Amidst the whiz of arrows slain,
Has fallen upon Fjalar's plain.
There, by the ocean's rocky shore,
The waves are stained with the red gore
Of stout Earl Hakon Grjotgard's son,
And of brave warriors many a one.

14. HARALD AND THE SWEDISH KING EIRIK.

King Harald came with his fleet eastward to Viken and landed at Tunsberg, which was then a trading town. He had then been four years in Throndhjem, and in all that time had not been in Viken. Here he heard the news that Eirik Eymundson, king of Sweden, had laid under him Vermaland, and was taking scat or land-tax from all the forest settlers; and also that he called the whole country north to Svinasund, and west along the sea, West Gautland; and which altogether he reckoned to his kingdom, and took land-tax from it. Over this country he had set an earl, by name Hrane Gauzke, who had the earldom between Svinasund and the Gaut river, and was a mighty earl. And it was told to King Harald that the Swedish king said he would not rest until he had as great a kingdom in Viken as Sigurd Hring, or his son Ragnar Lodbrok, had possessed; and that was Raumarike and Vestfold, all the way to the isle Grenmar, and also Vingulmark, and all that lay south of it. In all these districts many chiefs, and many other people, had given obedience to the Swedish king. King Harald was very angry at this, and summoned the bondes to a Thing at Fold, where he laid an accusation against them for treason towards him. Some bondes defended themselves from the accusation, some paid fines, some were punished. He went thus through the whole district during the summer, and in harvest he did the same in Raumarike, and laid the two districts under his power. Towards winter he heard that Eirik king of Sweden was, with his court, going about in Vermaland in guest-quarters.

15. HARALD AT A FEAST OF THE PEASANT AKE.

King Harald takes his way across the Eid forest eastward, and comes out in Vermaland, where he also orders feasts to be prepared for himself. There was a man by name Ake, who was the greatest of the bondes of Vermaland, very rich, and at that time very aged. He sent men to King Harald, and invited him to a feast, and the king promised to come on the day appointed. Ake invited also King Eirik to a feast, and appointed the same day. Ake had a great feasting hall, but it was old; and he made a new hall, not less than the old one, and had it ornamented in the most splendid

way. The new hall he had hung with new hangings, but the old had only its old ornaments. Now when the kings came to the feast, King Eirik with his court was taken into the old hall; but Harald with his followers into the new. The same difference was in all the table furniture, and King Eirik and his men had the old-fashioned vessels and horns, but all gilded and splendid; while King Harald and his men had entirely new vessels and horns adorned with gold, all with carved figures, and shining like glass; and both companies had the best of liquor. Ake the bonde had formerly been King Halfdan the Black's man. Now when daylight came, and the feast was quite ended, and the kings made themselves ready for their journey, and the horses were saddled, came Ake before King Harald, leading in his hand his son Ubbe, a boy of twelve years of age, and said, "If the goodwill I have shown to thee, sire, in my feast, be worth thy friendship, show it hereafter to my son. I give him to thee now for thy service." The king thanked him with many agreeable words for his friendly entertainment, and promised him his full friendship in return. Then Ake brought out great presents, which he gave to the king, and they gave each other thereafter the parting kiss. Ake went next to the Swedish king, who was dressed and ready for the road, but not in the best humour. Ake gave to him also good and valuable gifts; but the king answered only with few words, and mounted his horse. Ake followed the king on the road and talked with him. The road led through a wood which was near to the house; and when Ake came to the wood, the king said to him, "How was it that thou madest such a difference between me and King Harald as to give him the best of everything, although thou knowest thou art my man?" "I think" answered Ake, "that there failed in it nothing, king, either to you or to your attendants, in friendly entertainment at this feast. But that all the utensils for your drinking were old, was because you are now old; but King Harald is in the bloom of youth, and therefore I gave him the new things. And as to my being thy man, thou art just as much my man." On this the king out with his sword, and gave Ake his deathwound. King Harald was ready now also to mount his horse, and desired that Ake should be called. The people went to seek him; and some ran up the road that King Eirik had taken, and found Ake there dead. They came back, and told the news to King Harald, and he bids his men to be up, and avenge Ake the bonde. And away rode he and his men the way King Eirik had taken, until they came in sight of each other. Each for himself rode as hard as he could, until Eirik came into the wood which divides Gautland and Vermaland. There King Harald wheels about, and returns to Vermaland, and lays the country under him, and kills King Eirik's men wheresoever he can find them. In winter King Harald returned to Raumarike, and dwelt there a while.

16. HARALD'S JOURNEY TO TUNSBURG.

King Harald went out in winter to his ships at Tunsberg, rigged them, and sailed away eastward over the fiord, and subjected all Vingulmark to his dominion. All winter he was out with his ships, and marauded in Ranrike; so says Thorbjorn Hornklofe:—

The Norseman's king is on the sea,
Tho' bitter wintry cold it be.—
On the wild waves his Yule keeps he.
When our brisk king can get his way,
He'll no more by the fireside stay
Than the young sun; he makes us play
The game of the bright sun-god Frey.
But the soft Swede loves well the fire
The well-stuffed couch, the doway glove,
And from the hearth-seat will not move.

The Gautlanders gathered people together all over the country.

17. THE BATTLE IN GAUTLAND.

In spring, when the ice was breaking up, the Gautlanders drove stakes into the Gaut river to hinder King Harald with his ships from coming to the land. But King Harald laid his ships alongside the stakes, and plundered the country, and burnt all around; so says Hornklofe:—

The king who finds a dainty feast,
For battle-bird and prowling beast,
Has won in war the southern land
That lies along the ocean's strand.

The leader of the helmets, he
Who leads his ships o'er the dark sea,
Harald, whose high-rigged masts appear
Like antlered fronts of the wild deer,
Has laid his ships close alongside
Of the foe's piles with daring pride.

Afterwards the Gautlanders came down to the strand with a great army, and gave battle to King Harald, and great was the fall of men. But it was King Harald who gained the day. Thus says Hornklofe:—

Whistles the battle-axe in its swing
O'er head the whizzing javelins sing,
Helmet and shield and hauberk ring;
The air-song of the lance is loud,
The arrows pipe in darkening cloud;
Through helm and mail the foemen feel
The blue edge of our king's good steel
Who can withstand our gallant king?
The Gautland men their flight must wing.

18. HRANE GAUZKE'S DEATH.

King Harald went far and wide through Gautland, and many were the battles he fought there on both sides of the river, and in general he was victorious. In one of these battles fell Hrane Gauzke; and then the king took his whole land north of the river and west of the Veneren, and also Vermaland. And after he turned back therefrom, he set Duke Guthorm as chief to defend the country, and left a great force with him. King Harald himself went first to the Uplands, where he remained a while, and then proceeded northwards over the Dovrefjeld to Thronhjelm, where he dwelt for a long time. Harald began to have children. By Asa he had four sons. The eldest was Guthorm. Halfdan the Black and Halfdan the White were twins. Sigfrod was the fourth. They were all brought up in Thronhjelm with all honour.

19. BATTLE IN HAFERSFJORD.

News came in from the south land that the people of Hordaland and Rogaland, Agder and Thelemark, were gathering, and bringing together ships and weapons, and a great body of men. The leaders of this were Eirik king of Hordaland; Sulke king of Rogaland, and his brother Earl Sote: Kjotve the Rich, king of Agder, and his son Thor Haklang; and from Thelemark two brothers, Hroald Hryg and Had the Hard. Now when Harald got certain news of this, he assembled his forces, set his ships on the water, made himself ready with his men, and set out southwards along the coast, gathering many people from every district. King Eirik heard of this when he came south of Stad; and having assembled all the men he could expect, he proceeded southwards to meet the force which he knew was coming to his help from the east. The whole met together north of Jadar, and went into Hafersfjord, where King Harald was waiting with his forces. A great battle began, which was both hard and long; but at last King Harald gained the day. There King Eirik fell, and King Sulke, with his brother Earl Sote. Thor Haklang, who was a great berserk, had laid his ship against King Harald's, and there was above all measure a desperate attack, until Thor Haklang fell, and his whole ship was cleared of men. Then King Kjotve fled to a little isle outside, on which there was a good place of strength. Thereafter all his men fled, some to their ships, some up to the land; and the latter ran southwards over the country of Jadar. So says Hornklofe, viz.:—

Has the news reached you?—have you heard
Of the great fight at Hafersfjord,
Between our noble king brave Harald
And King Kjotve rich in gold?
The foeman came from out the East,
Keen for the fray as for a feast.
A gallant sight it was to see
Their fleet sweep o'er the dark-blue sea:
Each war-ship, with its threatening throat
Of dragon fierce or ravenous brute
Grim gaping from the prow; its wales
Glittering with burnished shields, like scales
Its crew of udal men of war,
Whose snow-white targets shone from far
And many a mailed spearman stout
From the West countries round about,
English and Scotch, a foreign host,
And swordmen from the far French coast.

And as the foemen's ships drew near,
 The dreadful din you well might hear
 Savage berserks roaring mad,
 And champions fierce in wolf-skins clad,
 Howling like wolves; and clanking jar
 Of many a mail-clad man of war.
 Thus the foe came; but our brave king
 Taught them to fly as fast again.
 For when he saw their force come o'er,
 He launched his war-ships from the shore.
 On the deep sea he launched his fleet
 And boldly rowed the foe to meet.
 Fierce was the shock, and loud the clang
 Of shields, until the fierce Haklang,
 The foeman's famous berserk, fell.
 Then from our men burst forth the yell
 Of victory, and the King of Gold
 Could not withstand our Harald bold,
 But fled before his flaky locks
 For shelter to the island rocks.
 All in the bottom of the ships
 The wounded lay, in ghastly heaps;
 Backs up and faces down they lay
 Under the row-seats stowed away;
 And many a warrior's shield, I ween
 Might on the warrior's back be seen,
 To shield him as he fled amain
 From the fierce stone-storm's pelting rain.
 The mountain-folk, as I've heard say,
 Ne'er stopped as they ran from the fray,
 Till they had crossed the Jadar sea,
 And reached their homes—so keen each soul
 To drown his fright in the mead bowl.

20. HARALD SUPREME SOVEREIGN IN NORWAY.

After this battle King Harald met no opposition in Norway, for all his opponents and greatest enemies were cut off. But some, and they were a great multitude, fled out of the country, and thereby great districts were peopled. Jemtaland and Helsingjaland were peopled then, although some Norwegians had already set up their habitation there. In the discontent that King Harald seized on the lands of Norway, the out-countries of Iceland and the Farey Isles were discovered and peopled. The Northmen had also a great resort to Hjaltland (Shetland Isles) and many men left Norway, flying the country on account of King Harald, and went on viking cruises into the West sea. In winter they were in the Orkney Islands and Hebrides; but marauded in summer in Norway, and did great damage. Many, however, were the mighty men who took service under King Harald, and became his men, and dwelt in the land with him.

21. HARALD'S MARRIAGE AND HIS CHILDREN.

When King Harald had now become sole king over all Norway, he remembered what that proud girl had said to him; so he sent men to her, and had her brought to him, and took her to his bed. And these were their children: Alof—she was the eldest; then was their son Hrorek; then Sigtryg, Frode, and Thorgils. King Harald had many wives and many children. Among them he had one wife, who was called Ragnhild the Mighty, a daughter of King Eirik, from Jutland; and by her he had a son, Eirik Blood-axe. He was also married to Svanhild, a daughter of Earl Eystein; and their sons were Olaf Geirstadaalf, Bjorn and Ragnar Rykkil. Lastly, King Harald married Ashild, a daughter of Hring Dagson, up in Ringerike; and their children were, Dag, Hring, Gudrod Skiria, and Ingigerd. It is told that King Harald put away nine wives when he married Ragnhild the Mighty. So says Hornklofe:—

Harald, of noblest race the head,
 A Danish wife took to his bed;
 And out of doors nine wives he thrust,—
 The mothers of the princes first.
 Who 'mong Holmrygians hold command,
 And those who rule in Hordaland.
 And then he packed from out the place
 The children born of Holge's race.

King Harald's children were all fostered and brought up by their relations on the mother's side. Guthorm the Duke had poured water over King Harald's eldest son and had given him

his own name. He set the child upon his knee, and was his foster-father, and took him with himself eastward to Viken, and there he was brought up in the house of Guthorm. Guthorm ruled the whole land in Viken and the Uplands, when King Harald was absent.

22. KING HARALD'S VOYAGE TO THE WEST.

King Harald heard that the vikings, who were in the West sea in winter, plundered far and wide in the middle part of Norway; and therefore every summer he made an expedition to search the isles and out-skeries on the coast. Wheresoever the vikings heard of him they all took to flight, and most of them out into the open ocean. At last the king grew weary of this work, and therefore one summer he sailed with his fleet right out into the West sea. First he came to Hjaltland (Shetland), and he slew all the vikings who could not save themselves by flight. Then King Harald sailed southwards, to the Orkney Islands, and cleared them all of vikings. Thereafter he proceeded to the Sudreys (Hebrides), plundered there, and slew many vikings who formerly had had men-at-arms under them. Many a battle was fought, and King Harald was always victorious. He then plundered far and wide in Scotland itself, and had a battle there. When he was come westward as far as the Isle of Man, the report of his exploits on the land had gone before him; for all the inhabitants had fled over to Scotland, and the island was left entirely bare both of people and goods, so that King Harald and his men made no booty when they landed. So says Hornklofe:—

The wise, the noble king, great
 Whose hand so freely scatters gold,
 Led many a northern shield to war
 Against the town upon the shore.
 The wolves soon gathered on the sand
 Of that sea-shore; for Harald's hand
 The Scottish army drove away,
 And on the coast left wolves a prey.

In this war fell Ivar, a son of Ragnvald, Earl of More; and King Harald gave Ragnvald, as a compensation for the loss, the Orkney and Shetland isles, when he sailed from the West; but Ragnvald immediately gave both these countries to his brother Sigurd, who remained behind them; and King Harald, before sailing eastward, gave Sigurd the earldom of them. Thorstein the Red, a son of Olaf the White and of Aud the Wealthy, entered into partnership with him; and after plundering in Scotland, they subdued Caithness and Sutherland, as far as Ekkjalsbakke. Earl Sigurd killed Melbridge Tooth, a Scotch earl, and hung his head to his stirrup-leather; but the calf of his leg were scratched by the teeth, which were sticking out from the head, and the wound caused inflammation in his leg, of which the earl died, and he was laid in a mound at Ekkjalsbakke. His son Guthorm ruled over these countries for about a year thereafter, and died without children. Many vikings, both Danes and Northmen, set themselves down then in those countries.

23. HARALD HAS HIS HAIR CLIPPED.

After King Harald had subdued the whole land, he was one day at a feast in More, given by Earl Ragnvald. Then King Harald went into a bath, and had his hair dressed. Earl Ragnvald now cut his hair, which had been uncut and uncombed for ten years; and therefore the king had been called Lufa (i.e., with rough matted hair). But then Earl Ragnvald gave him the distinguishing name—Harald Harfager (i.e., fair hair); and all who saw him agreed that there was the greatest truth in the surname, for he had the most beautiful and abundant head of hair.

24. ROLF GANGER DRIVEN INTO BANISHMENT.

Earl Ragnvald was King Harald's dearest friend, and the king had the greatest regard for him. He was married to Hild, a daughter of Rolf Nefia, and their sons were Rolf and Thorer. Earl Ragnvald had also three sons by concubines,—the one called Hallad, the second Einar, the third Hrolaug; and all three were grown men when their brothers born in marriage were still children Rolf

became a great viking, and was of so stout a growth that no horse could carry him, and wheresoever he went he must go on foot; and therefore he was called Rolf Ganger. He plundered much in the East sea. One summer, as he was coming from the eastward on a viking's expedition to the coast of Viken, he landed there and made a cattle foray. As King Harald happened, just at that time, to be in Viken, he heard of it, and was in a great rage; for he had forbid, by the greatest punishment, the plundering within the bounds of the country. The king assembled a Thing, and had Rolf declared an outlaw over all Norway. When Rolf's mother, Hild heard of it she hastened to the king, and entreated peace for Rolf; but the king was so enraged that here entreaty was of no avail. Then Hild spake these lines:—

Think'st thou, King Harald, in thy anger,
To drive away my brave Rolf Ganger
Like a mad wolf, from out the land?
Why, Harald, raise thy mighty hand?
Why banish Nefia's gallant name-son,
The brother of brave udal-men?
Why is thy cruelty so fell?
Bethink thee, monarch, it is ill
With such a wolf at wolf to play,
Who, driven to the wild woods away
May make the king's best deer his prey.

Rolf Ganger went afterwards over sea to the West to the Hebrides, or Sudreys; and at last farther west to Valland, where he plundered and subdued for himself a great earldom, which he peopled with Northmen, from which that land is called Normandy. Rolf Ganger's son was William, father to Richard, and grandfather to another Richard, who was the father of Robert Longspear, and grandfather of William the Bastard, from whom all the following English kings are descended. From Rolf Ganger also are descended the earls in Normandy. Queen Ragnhild the Mighty lived three years after she came to Norway; and, after her death, her son and King Harald's was taken to the herse Thorer Hroaldson, and Eirik was fostered by him.

25. OF THE FIN SVASE AND KING HARALD.

King Harald, one winter, went about in guest-quarters in the Uplands, and had ordered a Christmas feast to be prepared for him at the farm Thoptar. On Christmas eve came Svase to the door, just as the king went to table, and sent a message to the king to ask if he would go out with him. The king was angry at such a message, and the man who had brought it in took out with him a reply of the king's displeasure. But Svase, notwithstanding, desired that his message should be delivered a second time; adding to it, that he was the Fin whose hut the king had promised to visit, and which stood on the other side of the ridge. Now the king went out, and promised to go with him, and went over the ridge to his hut, although some of his men dissuaded him. There stood Snaefrid, the daughter of Svase, a most beautiful girl; and she filled a cup of mead for the king. But he took hold both of the cup and of her hand. Immediately it was as if a hot fire went through his body; and he wanted that very night to take her to his bed. But Svase said that should not be unless by main force, if he did not first make her his lawful wife. Now King Harald made Snaefrid his lawful wife, and loved her so passionately that he forgot his kingdom, and all that belonged to his high dignity. They had four sons: the one was Sigurd Hrise; the others Halfdan Haleg, Gudrod Ljome and Ragnvald Rettilbeine. Thereafter Snaefrid died; but her corpse never changed, but was as fresh and red as when she lived. The king sat always beside her, and thought she would come to life again. And so it went on for three years that he was sorrowing over her death, and the people over his delusion. At last Thorleif the Wise succeeded, by his prudence, in curing him of his delusion by accosting him thus:—"It is nowise wonderful, king, that thou grievest over so beautiful and noble a wife, and bestowest costly coverlets and beds of down on her corpse, as she desired; but these honours fall short of what is due, as she still lies in the same clothes. It would be more suitable to raise her, and change her dress." As soon as the body was raised in the bed all sorts of corruption and foul smells came from it, and it was necessary in all haste to gather a pile of wood and burn it; but before

this could be done the body turned blue, and worms, toads, newts, paddocks, and all sorts of ugly reptiles came out of it, and it sank into ashes. Now the king came to his understanding again, threw the madness out of his mind, and after that day ruled his kingdom as before. He was strengthened and made joyful by his subjects, and his subjects by him and the country by both.

26. OF THJODOLF OF HVIN, THE SKALD.

After King Harald had experienced the cunning of the Fin woman, he was so angry that he drove from him the sons he had with her, and would not suffer them before his eyes. But one of them, Gudrod Ljome, went to his foster-father Thjodolf of Hvin, and asked him to go to the king, who was then in the Uplands; for Thjodolf was a great friend of the king. And so they went, and came to the king's house late in the evening, and sat down together unnoticed near the door. The king walked up and down the floor casting his eye along the benches; for he had a feast in the house, and the mead was just mixed. The king then murmured out these lines:—

Tell me, ye aged gray-haired heroes,
Who have come here to seek repose,
Wherefore must I so many keep
Of such a set, who, one and all,
Right dearly love their souls to steep,
From morn till night, in the mead-bowl?

Then Thjodolf replies:—

A certain wealthy chief, I think,
Would gladly have had more to drink
With him, upon one bloody day,
When crowns were cracked in our sword-play.

Thjodolf then took off his hat, and the king recognised him, and gave him a friendly reception. Thjodolf then begged the king not to cast off his sons; "for they would with great pleasure have taken a better family descent upon the mother's side, if the king had given it to them." The king assented, and told him to take Gudrod with him as formerly; and he sent Halfdan and Sigurd to Ringerike, and Ragnvald to Hadaland, and all was done as the king ordered. They grew up to be very clever men, very expert in all exercises. In these times King Harald sat in peace in the land, and the land enjoyed quietness and good crops.

27. OF EARL TORFEINAR'S OBTAINING ORKNEY.

When Earl Ragnvald in More heard of the death of his brother Earl Sigurd, and that the vikings were in possession of the country, he sent his son Hallad westward, who took the title of earl to begin with, and had many men-at-arms with him. When he arrived at the Orkney Islands, he established himself in the country; but both in harvest, winter, and spring, the vikings cruised about the isles plundering the headlands, and committing depredations on the coast. Then Earl Hallad grew tired of the business, resigned his earldom, took up again his rights as an allodial owner, and afterwards returned eastward into Norway. When Earl Ragnvald heard of this he was ill pleased with Hallad, and said his son were very unlike their ancestors. Then said Einar, "I have enjoyed but little honour among you, and have little affection here to lose: now if you will give me force enough, I will go west to the islands, and promise you what at any rate will please you—that you shall never see me again." Earl Ragnvald replied, that he would be glad if he never came back; "For there is little hope," said he, "that thou will ever be an honour to thy friends, as all thy kin on thy mother's side are born slaves." Earl Ragnvald gave Einar a vessel completely equipped, and he sailed with it into the West sea in harvest. When he came to the Orkney Isles, two vikings, Thorer Treskeg and Kalf Skurfa, were in his way with two vessels. He attacked them instantly, gained the battle, and slew the two vikings. Then this was sung:—

Then gave he Treskeg to the trolls,
Torfeinar slew Skurfa.

He was called Torfeinar, because he cut peat for fuel, there being no firewood, as in Orkney there are no woods. He afterwards was earl over the islands, and was a mighty man. He was ugly, and blind of an eye, yet very sharp-sighted withal.

28. KING EIRIK EYMUNDSON'S DEATH.

Duke Guthorm dwelt principally at Tunsberg, and governed the whole of Viken when the king was not there. He defended the land, which, at that time, was much plundered by the vikings. There were disturbances also up in Gautland as long as King Eirik Eymundson lived; but he died when King Harald Harfager had been ten years king of all Norway.

29. GUTHORM'S DEATH IN TUNSBURG.

After Eirik, his son Bjorn was king of Svithjod for fifty years. He was father of Eirik the Victorious, and of Olaf the father of Styrbjorn. Guthorm died on a bed of sickness at Tunsberg, and King Harald gave his son Guthorm the government of that part of his dominions and made him chief of it.

30. EARL RAGNVALD BURNT IN HIS HOUSE.

When King Harald was forty years of age many of his sons were well advanced, and indeed they all came early to strength and manhood. And now they began to take it ill that the king would not give them any part of the kingdom, but put earls into every district; for they thought earls were of inferior birth to them. Then Halfdan Haleg and Gudrod Ljome set off one spring with a great force, and came suddenly upon Earl Ragnvald, earl of More, and surrounded the house in which he was, and burnt him and sixty men in it. Thereafter Halfdan took three long-ships, and fitted them out, and sailed into the West sea; but Gudrod set himself down in the land which Ragnvald formerly had. Now when King Harald heard this he set out with a great force against Gudrod, who had no other way left but to surrender, and he was sent to Agder. King Harald then set Earl Ragnvald's son Thoror over More, and gave him his daughter Alof, called Arbot, in marriage. Earl Thoror, called the Silent, got the same territory his father Earl Ragnvald had possessed.

31. HALFDAN HALEG'S DEATH.

Halfdan Haleg came very unexpectedly to Orkney, and Earl Einar immediately fled; but came back soon after about harvest time, unnoticed by Halfdan. They met and after a short battle Halfdan fled the same night. Einar and his men lay all night without tents, and when it was light in the morning they searched the whole island and killed every man they could lay hold of. Then Einar said "What is that I see upon the isle of Rinanse? Is it a man or a bird? Sometimes it raises itself up, and sometimes lies down again." They went to it, and found it was Halfdan Haleg, and took him prisoner.

Earl Einar sang the following song the evening before he went into this battle:—

Where is the spear of Hrollaug? where
Is stout Rolf Ganger's bloody spear!
I see them not; yet never fear,
For Einar will not vengeance spare
Against his father's murderers, though
Hrollaug and Rolf are somewhat slow,
And silent Thoror sits add dreams
At home, beside the mead-bowl's streams.

Thereafter Earl Einar went up to Halfdan, and cut a spread eagle upon his back, by striking his sword through his back into his belly, dividing his ribs from the backbone down to his loins, and tearing out his lungs; and so Halfdan was killed. Einar then sang:—

For Ragnvald's death my sword is red:
Of vengeance it cannot be said
That Einar's share is left unsped.
So now, brave boys, let's raise a mound,—
Heap stones and gravel on the ground
O'er Halfdan's corpse: this is the way
We Norsemen our scat duties pay.

Then Earl Einar took possession of the Orkney Isles as before. Now when these tidings came to Norway, Halfdan's brothers took it much to heart, and thought that his death demanded vengeance; and many were of the same opinion. When Einar heard this, he sang:—

Many a stout udal-man, I know,
Has cause to wish my head laid low;
And many an angry udal knife
Would gladly drink of Eina's life.
But ere they lay Earl Einar low,—
Ere this stout heart betrays its cause,
Full many a heart will writhe, we know,
In the wolf's fangs, or eagle's claws.

32. HARALD AND EINAR RECONCILED.

King Harald now ordered a levy, and gathered a great force, with which he proceeded westward to Orkney; and when Earl Einar heard that King Harald was come, he fled over to Caithness. He made the following verses on this occasion:—

Many a bearded man must roam,
An exile from his house and home,
For cow or horse; but Halfdan's gore
Is red on Rinanse's wild shore.
A nobler deed—on Harald's shield
The arm of one who ne'er will yield
Has left a scar. Let peasants dread
The vengeance of the Norsemen's head:
I reck not of his wrath, but sing,
'Do thy worst!—I defy thee, king!—'

Men and messages, however, passed between the king and the earl, and at last it came to a conference; and when they met the earl submitted the case altogether to the king's decision, and the king condemned the earl Einar and the Orkney people to pay a fine of sixty marks of gold. As the bondes thought this was too heavy for them to pay, the earl offered to pay the whole if they would surrender their udal lands to him. This they all agreed to do: the poor because they had but little pieces of land; the rich because they could redeem their udal rights again when they liked. Thus the earl paid the whole fine to the king, who returned in harvest to Norway. The earls for a long time afterwards possessed all the udal lands in Orkney, until Sigurd son of Hlodver gave back the udal rights.

33. DEATH OF GUTHORM AND HALFDAN THE WHITE.

While King Harald's son Guthorm had the defence of Viken, he sailed outside of the islands on the coast, and came in by one of the mouths of the tributaries of the Gaut river. When he lay there Solve Klofe came upon him, and immediately gave him battle, and Guthorm fell. Halfdan the White and Halfdan the Black went out on an expedition, and plundered in the East sea, and had a battle in Eistland, where Halfdan the White fell.

34. MARRIAGE OF EIRIK.

Eirik, Harald's son, was fostered in the house of the herse Thoror, son of Hroald, in the Fjord district. He was the most beloved and honoured by King Harald of all his sons. When Eirik was twelve years old, King Harald gave him five long-ships, with which he went on an expedition,—first in the Baltic; then southwards to Denmark, Friesland, and Saxland; on which expedition he passed four years. He then sailed out into the West sea and plundered in Scotland, Bretland, Ireland, and Valland, and passed four years more in this way. Then he sailed north to Finmark, and all the way to Bjarmaland, where he had many a battle, and won many a victory. When he came back to Finmark, his men found a girl in a Lapland hut, whose equal for beauty they never had seen. She said her name was Gunhild, and that her father dwelt in Halogaland, and was called Ozur Tote. "I am here," she said, "to learn sorcery from two of the most knowing Fins in all Finmark, who are now out hunting. They both want me in marriage. They are so skilful that they can hunt out traces either upon the frozen or the thawed earth, like dogs; and they can run so swiftly on skees that neither man nor beast can come near them in speed. They hit whatever they take aim at, and thus kill every man who comes near them. When they are angry the very earth turns away in terror, and whatever living thing they look upon then falls dead. Now ye must not come in their way; but I will hide you here in the hut, and ye must try to get them killed." They agreed to it, and she hid them, and then took a leather bag, in which they thought there were ashes which she took in her hand, and strewed both outside

and inside of the hut. Shortly after the Fins came home, and asked who had been there; and she answered, "Nobody has been here." "That is wonderful," said they, "we followed the traces close to the hut, and can find none after that." Then they kindled a fire, and made ready their meat, and Gunhild prepared her bed. It had so happened that Gunhild had slept the three nights before, but the Fins had watched the one upon the other, being jealous of each other. "Now," she said to the Fins, "come here, and lie down one on each side of me." On which they were very glad to do so. She laid an arm round the neck of each and they went to sleep directly. She roused them up; but they fell to sleep again instantly, and so soundly she scarcely could waken them. She even raised them up in the bed, and still they slept. Thereupon she too two great seal-skin bags, and put their heads in them, and tied them fast under their arms; and then she gave a wink to the king's men. They run forth with their weapons, kill the two Fins, and drag them out of the hut. That same night came such a dreadful thunder-storm that the could not stir. Next morning they came to the ship, taking Gunhild with them, and presented her to Eirik. Eirik and his followers then sailed southwards to Halogaland and he sent word to Ozur Tote, the girl's father, to meet him. Eirik said he would take his daughter in marriage, to which Ozur Tote consented, and Eirik took Gunhild and went southwards with her (A.D. 922).

35. HARALD DIVIDES HIS KINGDOM.

When King Harald was fifty years of age many of his sons were grown up, and some were dead. Many of them committed acts of great violence in the country, and were in discord among themselves. They drove some of the king's earls out of their properties, and even killed some of them. Then the king called together a numerous Thing in the south part of the country, and summoned to it all the people of the Uplands. At this Thing he gave to all his sons the title of king, and made a law that his descendants in the male line should each succeed to the kingly title and dignity; but his descendants by the female side only to that of earl. And he divided the country among them thus:—Vingulmark, Raumarike, Vestfold and Thelamark, he bestowed on Olaf, Bjorn, Sigtryg, Frode, and Thorgils. Hedemark and Gudbrandsdal he gave to Dag, Hring, and Ragnar. To Snaefrid's sons he gave Ringerike, Hadeland, Thoten, and the lands thereto belonging. His son Guthorm, as before mentioned, he had set over the country from Glommen to Svinasund and Ranrike. He had set him to defend the country to the East, as before has been written. King Harald himself generally dwelt in the middle of the country, and Hrorek and Gudrod were generally with his court, and had great estates in Hordaland and in Sogn. King Eirik was also with his father King Harald; and the king loved and regarded him the most of all his sons, and gave him Halogaland and North More, and Raumsdal. North in Thronthjem he gave Halfdan the Black, Halfdan the White, and Sigrod land to rule over. In each of these districts he gave his sons the one half of his revenues, together with the right to sit on a high-seat,—a step higher than earls, but a step lower than his own high-seat. His king's seat each of his sons wanted for himself after his death, but he himself destined it for Eirik. The Thronthjem people wanted Halfdan the Black to succeed to it. The people of Viken, and the Uplands, wanted those under whom they lived. And thereupon new quarrels arose among the brothers; and because they thought their dominions too little, they drove about in piratical expeditions. In this way, as before related, Guthorm fell at the mouth of the Gaut river, slain by Solve Klofe; upon which Olaf took the kingdom he had possessed. Halfdan the White fell in Eistland, Halfdan Haleg in Orkney. King Harald gave ships of war to Thorgils and Frode, with which they went westward on a viking cruise, and plundered in Scotland, Ireland, and Bretland. They were the first of the Northmen who took Dublin. It is said that Frode got poisoned drink there; but Thorgils was a long time king over Dublin, until he fell into a snare of the Irish, and was killed.

36. DEATH OF RAGNALD RETTILBEINE.

Eirik Blood-axe expected to be head king over all his brothers and King Harald intended he should be so; and the father and

son lived long together. Ragnvald Rettilbeine governed Hadaland, and allowed himself to be instructed in the arts of witchcraft, and became an area warlock. Now King Harald was a hater of all witchcraft. There was a warlock in Hordaland called Vitgeir; and when the king sent a message to him that he should give up his art of witchcraft, he replied in this verse:—

The danger surely is not great
From wizards born of mean estate,
When Harald's son in Hadeland,
King Ragnvald, to the art lays hand.

But when King Harald heard this, King Eirik Blood-axe went by his orders to the Uplands, and came to Hadeland and burned his brother Ragnvald in a house, along with eighty other warlocks; which work was much praised.

37. DEATH OF GUDROD LJOME.

Gudrod Ljome was in winter on a friendly visit to his foster-father Thjodolf in Hvin, and had a well-manned ship, with which he wanted to go north to Rogaland. It was blowing a heavy storm at the time; but Gudrod was bent on sailing, and would not consent to wait. Thjodolf sang thus:—

Wait, Gudrod, till the storm is past,—
Loose not thy long-ship while the blast
Howls over-head so furiously,—
Trust not thy long-ship to the sea,—
Loose not thy long-ship from the shore;
Hark to the ocean's angry roar!
See how the very stones are tost
By raging waves high on the coast!
Stay, Gudrod, till the tempest's o'er—
Deep runs the sea off the Jadar's shore.

Gudrod set off in spite of what Thjodolf could say: and when they came off the Jadar the vessel sunk with them, and all on board were lost.

38. KING BJORN KAUPMAN'S DEATH.

King Harald's son, Bjorn, ruled over Vestfold at that time, and generally lived at Tunsberg, and went but little on war expeditions. Tunsberg at that time was much frequented by merchant vessels, both from Viken and the north country, and also from the south, from Denmark, and Saxland. King Bjorn had also merchant ships on voyages to other lands, by which he procured for himself costly articles, and such things as he thought needful; and therefore his brothers called him Farman (the Seaman), and Kaupman (the Chapman). Bjorn was a man of sense and understanding, and promised to become a good ruler. He made a good and suitable marriage, and had a son by his wife, who was named Gudrod. Eirik Blood-axe came from his Baltic cruise with ships of war, and a great force, and required his brother Bjorn to deliver to him King Harald's share of the scat and incomes of Vestfold. But it had always been the custom before, that Bjorn himself either delivered the money into the king's hands, or sent men of his own with it; and therefore he would continue with the old custom, and would not deliver the money. Eirik again wanted provisions, tents, and liquor. The brothers quarrelled about this; but Eirik got nothing and left the town. Bjorn went also out of the town towards evening up to Saeheim. In the night Eirik came back after Bjorn, and came to Saeheim just as Bjorn and his men were seated at table drinking. Eirik surrounded the house in which they were; but Bjorn with his men went out and fought. Bjorn, and many men with him, fell. Eirik, on the other hand, got a great booty, and proceeded northwards. But this work was taken very ill by the people of Viken, and Eirik was much disliked for it; and the report went that King Olaf would avenge his brother Bjorn, whenever opportunity offered. King Bjorn lies in the mound of Farmanshaug at Saeheim.

39. RECONCILIATION OF THE KINGS.

King Eirik went in winter northwards to More, and was at a feast in Solve, within the point Agdanes; and when Halfdan the Black heard of it he set out with his men, and surrounded the house in which they were. Eirik slept in a room which stood detached by itself, and he escaped into the forest with four others; but Halfdan

and his men burnt the main house, with all the people who were in it. With this news Eirik came to King Harald, who was very wroth at it, and assembled a great force against the Thronðhjem people. When Halfdan the Black heard this he levied ships and men, so that he had a great force, and proceeded with it to Stad, within Thorsbjerg. King Harald lay with his men at Reinsletta. Now people went between them, and among others a clever man called Guthorm Sindre, who was then in Halfdan the Black's army, but had been formerly in the service of King Harald, and was a great friend of both. Guthorm was a great skald, and had once composed a song both about the father and the son, for which they had offered him a reward. But he would take nothing; but only asked that, some day or other, they should grant him any request he should make, which they promised to do. Now he presented himself to King Harald, brought words of peace between them, and made the request to them both that they should be reconciled. So highly did the king esteem him, that in consequence of his request they were reconciled. Many other able men promoted this business as well as he; and it was so settled that Halfdan should retain the whole of his kingdom as he had it before, and should let his brother Eirik sit in peace. After this event Jorun, the skald-maid, composed some verses in "Sendibit" ("The Biting Message"):

I know that Harald Fairhair
Knew the dark deed of Halfdan.
To Harald Halfdan seemed
Angry and cruel.

40. BIRTH OF HAKON THE GOOD.

Earl Hakon Grjotgardson of Hlader had the whole rule over Thronðhjem when King Harald was anywhere away in the country; and Hakon stood higher with the king than any in the country of Thronðhjem. After Hakon's death his son Sigurd succeeded to his power in Thronðhjem, and was the earl, and had his mansion at Hlader. King Harald's sons, Halfdan the Black and Sigrod, who had been before in the house of his father Earl Hakon, continued to be brought up in his house. The sons of Harald and Sigurd were about the same age. Earl Sigurd was one of the wisest men of his time, and married Bergljot, a daughter of Earl Thoror the Silent; and her mother was Aloh Arbot, a daughter of Harald Harfager. When King Harald began to grow old he generally dwelt on some of his great farms in Hordaland; namely, Alreksstader or Saeheim, Fitjar, Utstein, or Ogvaldsnes in the island Kornt. When Harald was seventy years of age he begat a son with a girl called Thora Mosterstang, because her family came from Moster. She was descended from good people, being connected with Kare (Aslakson) of Hordaland; and was moreover a very stout and remarkably handsome girl. She was called the king's servant-girl; for at that time many were subject to service to the king who were of good birth, both men and women. Then it was the custom, with people of consideration, to choose with great care the man who should pour water over their children, and give them a name. Now when the time came that Thora, who was then at Moster, expected her confinement, she would to King Harald, who was then living at Saeheim; and she went northwards in a ship belonging to Earl Sigurd. They lay at night close to the land; and there Thora brought forth a child upon the land, up among the rocks, close to the ship's gangway, and it was a man child. Earl Sigurd poured water over him, and called him Hakon, after his own father, Hakon earl of Hlader. The boy soon grew handsome, large in size, and very like his father King Harald. King Harald let him follow his mother, and they were both in the king's house as long as he was an infant.

41. KING ATHELSTAN'S MESSAGE

At this time a king called Aethelstan had taken the Kingdom of England. He was called victorious and faithful. He sent men to Norway to King Harald, with the errand that the messengers should present him with a sword, with the hilt and handle gilt, and also the whole sheath adorned with gold and silver, and set with precious jewels. The ambassador presented the sword-hilt to the king, saying, "Here is a sword which King Aethelstan sends thee, with the request that thou wilt accept it." The king took the sword by the handle; whereupon the ambassador said, "Now thou hast taken the sword according to our king's desire, and therefore art

thou his subject as thou hast taken his sword." King Harald saw now that this was an insult, for he would be subject to no man. But he remembered it was his rule, whenever anything raised his anger, to collect himself, and let his passion run off, and then take the matter into consideration coolly. Now he did so, and consulted his friends, who all gave him the advice to let the ambassadors, in the first place, go home in safety.

42. HAUK'S JOURNEY TO ENGLAND.

The following summer King Harald sent a ship westward to England, and gave the command of it to Hauk Habrok. He was a great warrior, and very dear to the king. Into his hands he gave his son Hakon. Hank proceeded westward in England, and found King Athelstan in London, where there was just at the time a great feast and entertainment. When they came to the hall, Hauk told his men how they should conduct themselves; namely, that he who went first in should go last out, and all should stand in a row at the table, at equal distance from each other; and each should have his sword at his left side, but should fasten his cloak so that his sword should not be seen. Then they went into the hall, thirty in number. Hauk went up to the king and saluted him, and the king bade him welcome. Then Hauk took the child Hakon, and set it on the king's knee. The king looks at the boy, and asks Hauk what the meaning of this is. Hauk replies, "Herald the king bids thee foster his servant-girl's child." The king was in great anger, and seized a sword which lay beside him, and drew it, as if he was going to kill the child. Hauk says, "Thou hast borne him on thy knee, and thou canst murder him if thou wilt; but thou wilt not make an end of all King Harald's sons by so doing." On that Hauk went out with all his men, and took the way direct to his ship, and put to sea,—for they were ready,—and came back to King Harald. The king was highly pleased with this; for it is the common observation of all people, that the man who fosters another's children is of less consideration than the other. From these transactions between the two kings, it appears that each wanted to be held greater than the other; but in truth there was no injury, to the dignity of either, for each was the upper king in his own kingdom till his dying day.

43. HAKON, THE FOSTER-SON OF ATHELSTAN, IS BAPTIZED.

King Athelstan had Hakon baptized, and brought up in the right faith, and in good habits, and all sorts of good manners, and he loved Hakon above all his relations; and Hakon was beloved by all men. He was henceforth called Athelstan's foster-son. He was an accomplished skald, and he was larger, stronger and more beautiful than other men; he was a man of understanding and eloquence, and also a good Christian. King Athelstan gave Hakon a sword, of which the hilt and handle were gold, and the blade still better; for with it Hakon cut down a mill-stone to the centre eye, and the sword thereafter was called the Quernbite. Better sword never came into Norway, and Hakon carried it to his dying day.

44. EIRIK BROUGHT TO THE SOVEREIGNTY.

When King Harald was eighty years of age (A.D. 930) he became very heavy, and unable to travel through the country, or do the business of a king. Then he brought his son Eirik to his high-seat, and gave him the power and command over the whole land. Now when King Harald's other sons heard this, King Halfdan the Black also took a king's high-seat, and took all Thronðhjem land, with the consent of all the people, under his rule as upper king. After the death of Bjorn the Chapman, his brother Olaf took the command over Vestfold, and took Bjorn's son, Gudrod, as his foster-child. Olaf's son was called Trygve; and the two foster-brothers were about the same age, and were hopeful and clever. Trygve, especially, was remarkable as a stout and strong man. Now when the people of Viken heard that those of Hordaland had taken Eirik as upper king, they did the same, and made Olaf the upper king in Viken, which kingdom he retained. Eirik did not like this at all. Two years after this, Halfdan the Black died suddenly at a feast in Thronðhjem and the general report was that Gunhild had bribed

a witch to give him a death-drink. Thereafter the Thronðhjem people took Sigrod to be their king.

45. KING HARALD'S DEATH.

King Harald lived three years after he gave Eirik the supreme authority over his kingdom, and lived mostly on his great farms which he possessed, some in Rogaland, and some in Hordaland. Eirik and Gunhild had a son on whom King Harald poured water, and gave him his own name, and the promise that he should be king after his father Eirik. King Harald married most of his daughters within the country to his earls, and from them many great families are descended. Harald died on a bed of sickness in Hogaland (A.D. 933), and was buried under a mound at Haugar in Karmsund. In Haugesund is a church, now standing; and not far from the churchyard, at the north-west side, is King Harald Harfager's mound; but his grave-stone stands west of the church, and is thirteen feet and a half high, and two ells broad. One stone was set at head and one at the feet; on the top lay the slab, and below on both sides were laid small stones. The grave, mound, and stone, are there to the present day. Harald Harfager was, according to the report of men of knowledge, or remarkably handsome appearance, great and strong, and very generous and affable to his men. He was a great warrior in his youth; and people think that this was foretold by his mother's dream before his birth, as the lowest part of the tree she dreamt of was red as blood. The stem again was green and beautiful, which betokened his flourishing kingdom; and that the tree was white at the top showed that he should reach a grey-haired old age. The branches and twigs showed forth his posterity, spread over the whole land; for of his race, ever since. Norway has always had kings.

46. THE DEATH OF OLAF AND OF SIGROD.

King Eirik took all the revenues (A.D. 934), which the king had in the middle of the country, the next winter after King Harald's decease. But Olaf took all the revenues eastward in Viken, and their brother Sigrod all that of the Thronðhjem country. Eirik was very ill pleased with this; and the report went that he would attempt with force to get the sole sovereignty over the country, in the same way as his father had given it to him. Now when Olaf and Sigrod heard this, messengers passed between them; and after appointing a meeting place, Sigrod went eastward in spring to Viken, and he and his brother Olaf met at Tunsberg, and remained there a while. The same spring (A.D. 934), King Eirik levied a great force, and ships and steered towards Viken. He got such a strong steady gale that he sailed night and day, and came faster than the news of him. When he came to Tunsberg, Olaf and Sigrod, with their forces, went out of the town a little eastward to a ridge, where they drew up their men in battle order; but as Eirik had many more men he won the battle. Both brothers, Olaf and Sigrod, fell there; and both their grave-mounds are upon the ridge where they fell. Then King Eirik went through Viken, and subdued it, and remained far into summer. Gudrod and Trygve fled to the Uplands. Eirik was a stout handsome man, strong, and very manly,—a great and fortunate man of war; but bad-minded, gruff, unfriendly, and silent. Gunhild, his wife, was the most beautiful of women,—clever, with much knowledge, and lively; but a very false person, and very cruel in disposition. The children of King Eirik and Gunhild were, Gamle, the oldest; then Guthorm, Harald, Ragnfrod, Ragnhild, Erling, Gudrod, and Sigurd Sleva. All were handsome, and of manly appearance.

HAKON THE GOOD'S SAGA.

1. HAKON CHOSEN KING.

Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, was in England at the time (A.D. 934) he heard of his father King Harald's death, and he immediately made himself ready to depart. King Athelstan gave him men, and a choice of good ships, and fitted him out for his journey most excellently. In harvest time he came to Norway, where he heard of the death of his brothers, and that King Eirik was then in Viken. Then Hakon sailed northwards to Thronðhjem, where he went to Sigurd earl of Hlader who was the ablest man in Nor-

way. He gave Hakon a good reception; and they made a league with each other, by which Hakon promised great power to Sigurd if he was made king. They assembled then a numerous Thing, and Sigurd the earl recommended Hakon's cause to the Thing, and proposed him to the bondes as king. Then Hakon himself stood up and spoke; and the people said to each other, two and two, as they heard him, "Herald Harfager is come again, grown and young." The beginning of Hakon's speech was, that he offered himself to the bondes as king, and desired from them the title of king, and aid and forces to defend the kingdom. He promised, on the other hand, to make all the bondes udal-holders, and give every man udal rights to the land he lived on. This speech met such joyful applause, that the whole public cried and shouted that they would take him to be king. And so it was that the Thronðhjem people took Hakon, who was then fifteen years old, for king; and he took a court or bodyguard, and servants, and proceeded through the country. The news reached the Uplands that the people in Thronðhjem had taken to themselves a king, who in every respect was like King Harald Harfager,—with the difference, that Harald had made all the people of the land vassals, and unfree; but this Hakon wished well to every man, and offered the bondes to give them their udal rights again, which Harald had taken from them. All were rejoiced at this news, and it passed from mouth to mouth,—it flew, like fire in dry grass, through the whole land, and eastward to the land's end. Many bondes came from the Uplands to meet King Hakon. Some sent messengers, some tokens; and all to the same effect—that his men they would be: and the king received all thankfully.

2. KING HAKON'S PROGRESS THROUGH THE COUNTRY.

Early in winter, the king went to the Uplands, and summoned the people to a Thing; and there streamed all to him who could come. He was proclaimed king at every Thing; and then he proceeded eastward to Viken, where his brother's sons, Trygve and Gudrod, and many others, came unto him, and complained of the sorrow and evil his brother Eirik had wrought. The hatred to King Eirik grew more and more, the more liking all men took to King Hakon; and they got more boldness to say what they thought. King Hakon gave Trygve and Gudrod the title of kings, and the dominions which King Harald had bestowed on their fathers. Trygve got Ranrike and Vingulmark, and Gudrod, Vestfold; but as they were young, and in the years of childhood, he appointed able men to rule the land for them. He gave them the country on the same conditions as it had been given before,—that they should have half of the scat and revenues with him. Towards spring King Hakon returned north, over the Uplands, to Thronðhjem.

3. EIRIK'S DEPARTURE FROM THE COUNTRY.

King Hakon, early in spring, collected a great army at Thronðhjem, and fitted out ships. The people of Viken also had a great force on foot, and intended to join Hakon. King Eirik also levied people in the middle of the country; but it went badly with him to gather people, for the leading men left him, and went over to Hakon. As he saw himself not nearly strong enough to oppose Hakon, he sailed (A.D. 935) out to the West sea with such men as would follow him. He first sailed to Orkney, and took many people with him from that country; and then went south towards England, plundering in Scotland, and in the north parts of England, wherever he could land. Athelstan, the king of England, sent a message to Eirik, offering him dominions under him in England; saying that King Harald his father was a good friend of King Athelstan, and therefore he would do kindly towards his sons. Messengers passed between the two kings; and it came to an agreement that King Eirik should take Northumberland as a fief from King Athelstan, and which land he should defend against the Danes or other vikings. Eirik should let himself be baptized, together with his wife and children, and all the people who had followed him. Eirik accepted this offer, and was baptized, and adopted the right faith. Northumberland is called a fifth part of England. Eirik had his residence at York, where Lodbrok's sons,

it was said, had formerly been, and Northumberland was principally inhabited by Northmen. Since Lodbrok's sons had taken the country, Danes and Northmen often plundered there, when the power of the land was out of their hands. Many names of places in the country are Norwegian; as Grimsby, Haukflot, and many others.

4. EIRIK'S DEATH.

King Eirik had many people about him, for he kept many Northmen who had come with him from the East; and also many of his friends had joined him from Norway. But as he had little land, he went on a cruise every summer, and plundered in Scotland, the Hebrides, Ireland, and Bretland, by which he gathered property. King Athelstan died on a sick bed, after a reign of fourteen years, eight weeds, and three days. After him his brother Jatmund was king of England, and he was no friend to the Northmen. King Eirik, also, was in no great favour with him; and the word went about that King Jatmund would set another chief over Northumberland. Now when King Eirik heard this, he set off on a viking cruise to the westward; and from the Orkneys took with him the Earls Arnkel and Erlend, the sons of Earl Torfeinar. Then he sailed to the Hebrides, where there were many vikings and troop-kings, who joined their men to his. With all this force he steered to Ireland first, where he took with him all the men he could, and then to Bretland, and plundered; and sailed thereafter south to England, and marauded there as elsewhere. The people fled before him wherever he appeared. As King Eirik was a bold warrior, and had a great force, he trusted so much to his people that he penetrated far inland in the country, following and plundering the fugitives. King Jatmund had set a king, who was called Olaf, to defend the land; and he gathered an innumerable mass of people, with whom he marched against King Eirik. A dreadful battle ensued, in which many Englishmen fell; but for one who fell came three in his place out of the country behind, and when evening came on the loss of men turned on the side of the Northmen, and many people fell. Towards the end of the day, King Eirik and five kings with him fell. Three of them were Guthorm and his two sons, Ivar and Harek: there fell, also, Sigurd and Ragnvald; and with them Torfeinar's two sons, Arnkel and Erlend. Besides these, there was a great slaughter of Northmen; and those who escaped went to Northumberland, and brought the news to Gunhild and her sons (A.D. 941).

5. GUNHILD AND HER SONS.

When Gunhild and her sons knew for certain that King Eirik had fallen, after having plundered the land of the King of England, they thought there was no peace to be expected for them; and they made themselves ready to depart from Northumberland, with all the ships King Eirik had left, and all the men who would go with them. They took also all the loose property, and goods which they had gathered partly as taxes in England, partly as booty on their expeditions. With their army they first steered northward to Orkney, where Thorfin Hausakljufur was earl, a son of Torfeinar, and took up their station there for a time. Eirik's sons subdued these islands and Hjaltland, took scat for themselves, and staid there all the winter; but went on viking cruises in summer to the West, and plundered in Scotland and Ireland. About this Glum Geirason says:—

The hero who knows well to ride
The sea-horse o'er the foaming tide;—
He who in boyhood wild rode o'er
The seaman's horse to Skanea's shore.
And showed the Danes his galley's bow,
Right nobly scours the ocean now;
On Scotland's coast he lights the brand
Of flaming war; with conquering hand
Drives many a Scottish warrior tall
To the bright seats in Odin's hall.
The fire-spark, by the fiend of war
Fanned to a flame, soon spreads afar.
Crowds trembling fly,—the southern foes
Fall thick beneath the hero's blows:
The hero's blade drips red with gore,
Staining the green sward on the shore.

6. BATTLE IN JUTLAND.

When King Eirik had left the country, King Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, subdued the whole of Norway. The first winter (A.D. 936) he visited the western parts, and then went north, and settled in Thronthjem. But as no peace could be reasonably looked for so long as King Eirik with his forces could come to Norway from the West sea, he set himself with his men-at-arms in the middle of the country,—in the Fjord district, or in Sogn, or Hordaland, or Rogaland. Hakon placed Sigurd earl of Hlader over the whole Throradhjem district, as he and his father had before had it under Harald Harfager. When King Hakon heard of his brother Eirik's death, and also that his sons had no footing in England, he thought there was not much to fear from them, and he went with his troops one summer eastward to Viken. At that time the Danes plundered often in Viken, and wrought much evil there; but when they heard that King Hakon was come with a great army, they got out of the way, to Halland; and those who were nearest to King Hakon went out to sea, and over to Jotland (Jutland). When the king heard of this, he sailed after them with all his army. On arriving in Jutland he plundered all round; and when the country people heard of it, they assembled in a great body, and determined to defend their land, and fight. There was a great battle; and King Hakon fought so boldly, that he went forward before his banner without helmet or coat of mail. King Hakon won the victory, and drove the fugitives far up the country. So says Guthorm Sindre, in his song of Hakon:—

Furrowing the deep-blue sea with oars,
The king pursues to Jutland's shores.
They met; and in the battle storm
Of clashing shields, full many a form
Of goodly warrior on the plain,
Full many a corpse by Hakon slain,
Glutted the ravens, who from far,
Scenting the banquet-feast of war,
Came in black flocks to Jutland's plains
To drink the blood-wine from the veins.

7. BATTLE IN EYRARSUND (THE SOUND).

Then Hakon steered southwards with his fleet to seek the vikings, and so on to Sealand. He rowed with two cutters into the Eyrarsund, where he found eleven viking ships, and instantly attacked them. It ended in his gaining the victory, and clearing the viking ships of all their men. So says Guthorm Sindre:—

Hakon the Brave, whose skill all know
To bend in battle storm the bow,
Rushed o'er the waves to Sealand's tongue,
His two war-ships with gilt shields hung,
And cleared the decks with his blue sword
That rules the fate of war, on board
Eleven ships of the Vindland men.—
Famous is Hakon's name since then.

8. KING HAKON'S EXPEDITION TO DENMARK.

Thereafter King Hakon carried war far and wide in Sealand; plundering some, slaying others, taking some prisoners of war, taking ransom from others, and all without opposition. Then Hakon proceeded along the coast of Skane, pillaging everywhere, levying taxes and ransom from the country, and killing all vikings, both Danish and Vindish. He then went eastwards to the district of Gautland, marauded there, and took great ransom from the country. So says Guthorm Sindre:—

Hakon, who midst the battle shock
Stands like a firmly-rooted oak,
Subdued all Sealand with the sword:
From Vindland vikings the sea-bord
Of Scania swept; and, with the shield
Of Odin clad, made Gautland yield
A ransom of the ruddy gold,
Which Hakon to his war-men bold
Gave with free hand, who in his feud
Against the arrow-storm had stood.

King Hakon returned back in autumn with his army and an immense booty; and remained all the winter (A.D. 946) in Viken to defend it against the Danes and Gautlanders, if they should attack it.

9. OF KING TRYGVE.

In the same winter King Trygve Olafson returned from a viking cruise in the West sea, having before ravaged in Ireland and Scotland. In spring (A.D. 946) King Hakon went north, and set his brother's son, King Trygve, over Viken to defend that country against enemies. He gave him also in property all that he could reconquer of the country in Denmark, which the summer before King Hakon had subjected to payment of scat to him. So says Guthorm:—

King Hakon, whose sharp sword dyes red
The bright steel cap on many a head,
Has set a warrior brave and stout
The foreign foeman to keep out,—
To keep that green land safe from war
Which black Night bore to dwarf Annar .
For many a carle whose trade's to wield
The battle-axe, and swing the shield,
On the swan's ocean-skates has come,
In white-winged ships, across the foam,—
Across the sea, from far Ireland,
To war against the Norseman's land.

10. OF GUNHILD'S SONS.

King Harald Gormson ruled over Denmark at that time. He took it much amiss that King Hakon had made war in his dominions, and the report went that he would take revenge; but this did not take place so soon. When Gunhild and her sons heard there was enmity between Denmark and Norway, they began to turn their course from the West. They married King Eirik's daughter, Ragnhild, to Arnfin, a son of Thorfin Hausakljufer; and as soon as Eirik's sons went away, Thorfin took the earldom again over the Orkney Islands. Gamle Eirikson was somewhat older than the other brothers, but still he was not a grown man. When Gunhild and her sons came from the westward to Denmark, they were well received by King Harald. He gave them great fiefs in his kingdom, so that they could maintain themselves and their men very well. He also took Harald Eirikson to be his foster-son, set him on his knee, and thereafter he was brought up at the Danish king's court. Some of Eirik's sons went out on viking expeditions as soon as they were old enough, and gathered property, ravaging all around in the East sea. They grew up quickly to be handsome men, and far beyond their years in strength and perfection. Glum Geirason tells of one of them in the Grafeld song:—

I've heard that, on the Eastland coast,
Great victories were won and lost.
The king, whose hand is ever graced
With gift to skald, his banner placed
On, and still on; while, midst the play
Of swords, sung sharp his good sword's sway
As strong in arm as free of gold,
He thinn'd the ranks of warriors bold.

Then Eirik's sons turned northwards with their troops to Viken and marauded there; but King Trygve kept troops on foot with which he met them, and they had many a battle, in which the victory was sometimes on one side, and sometimes on the other. Sometimes Eirik's sons plundered in Viken, and sometimes Trygve in Sealand and Halland.

11. KING HAKON AS A LAW-GIVER.

As long as Hakon was king in Norway, there was good peace between the bondes and merchants; so that none did harm either to the life or goods of the other. Good seasons also there were, both by sea and land. King Hakon was of a remarkably cheerful disposition, clever in words, and very condescending. He was a man of great understanding also, and bestowed attention on law-giving. He gave out the Gula-thing's laws on the advice of Thorleif Spake (the Wise); also the Frosta-thing's laws on the advice of Earl Sigurd, and of other Thronthjem men of wisdom. Eidsiva-thing laws were first established in the country by Halfdan the Black, as has before been written.

12. THE BIRTH OF EARL HAKON THE GREAT.

King Hakon kept Yule at Thronthjem, and Earl Sigurd had made a feast for him at Hlader. The night of the first day of Yule the

earl's wife, Bergljot, was brought to bed of a boy-child, which afterwards King Hakon poured water over, and gave him his own name. The boy grew up, and became in his day a mighty and able man, and was earl after his father, who was King Hakon's dearest friend.

13. OF EYSTEIN THE BAD.

Eystein, a king of the Uplands, whom some called the Great, and some the Bad, once on a time made war in Thronthjem, and subdued Eyna district and Sparbyggia district, and set his own son Onund over them; but the Thronthjem people killed him. Then King Eystein made another inroad into Thronthjem, and ravaged the land far and wide, and subdued it. He then offered the people either his slave, who was called Thorer Faxe, or his dog, whose name was Saur, to be their king. They preferred the dog, as they thought they would sooner get rid of him. Now the dog was, by witchcraft, gifted with three men's wisdom; and when he barked, he spoke one word and barked two. A collar and chain of gold and silver were made for him, and his courtiers carried him on their shoulders when the weather or ways were foul. A throne was erected for him, and he sat upon a high place, as kings are used to sit. He dwelt on Eyin Idre (Idre Isle), and had his mansion in a place now called Saurshaug. It is told that the occasion of his death was that the wolves one day broke into his fold, and his courtiers stirred him up to defend his cattle; but when he ran down from his mound, and attacked the wolves, they tore him into pieces. Many other extraordinary things were done by this King Eystein against the Thronthjem people, and in consequence of this persecution and trouble, many chiefs and people fled and left their udal properties.

14. JAMTALAND AND HELSINGJALAND.

Ketil Jamte, a son of Earl Onund of Sparabu, went eastward across the mountain ridge, and with him a great multitude, who took all their farm-stock and goods with them. They cleared the woods, and established large farms, and settled the country afterwards called Jamtaland. Thorer Helsing, Ketil's grandson, on account of a murder, ran away from Jamtaland and fled eastward through the forest, and settled there. Many people followed, and that country, which extends eastward down to the seacoast, was called Helsingjaland; and its eastern parts are inhabited by Swedes. Now when Harald Harfager took possession of the whole country many people fled before him, both people of Thronthjem and of Naumudal districts; and thus new settlers came to Jamtaland, and some all the way to Helsingjaland. The Helsingjaland people travelled into Svithiod for their merchandise, and thus became altogether subjects of that country. The Jamtaland people, again, were in a manner between the two countries; and nobody cared about them, until Hakon entered into friendly intercourse with Jamtaland, and made friends of the more powerful people. Then they resorted to him, and promised him obedience and payment of taxes, and became his subjects; for they saw nothing but what was good in him, and being of Norwegian race they would rather stand under his royal authority than under the king of Sweden: and he gave them laws, and rights to their land. All the people of Helsingjaland did the same,—that is, all who were of Norwegian race, from the other side of the great mountain ridge.

15. HAKON SPREADS CHRISTIANITY.

King Hakon was a good Christian when he came to Norway; but as the whole country was heathen, with much heathenish sacrifice, and as many great people, as well as the favour of the common people, were to be conciliated, he resolved to practice his Christianity in private. But he kept Sundays, and the Friday fasts, and some token of the greatest holy-days. He made a law that the festival of Yule should begin at the same time as Christian people held it, and that every man, under penalty, should brew a meal of malt into ale, and therewith keep the Yule holy as long as it lasted. Before him, the beginning of Yule, or the slaughter night, was the night of mid-winter (Dec. 14), and Yule was kept for three days thereafter. It was his intent, as soon as he had set himself fast in the land, and had subjected the whole to his power, to introduce

Christianity. He went to work first by enticing to Christianity the men who were dearest to him; and many, out of friendship to him, allowed themselves to be baptized, and some laid aside sacrifices. He dwelt long in the Thronðhjem district, for the strength of the country lay there; and when he thought that, by the support of some powerful people there, he could set up Christianity he sent a message to England for a bishop and other teachers; and when they arrived in Norway, Hakon made it known that he would proclaim Christianity over all the land. The people of More and Raumsdal referred the matter to the people of Thronðhjem. King Hakon then had several churches consecrated, and put priests into them; and when he came to Thronðhjem he summoned the bondes to a Thing, and invited them to accept Christianity. They gave an answer to the effect that they would defer the matter until the Frosta-thing, at which there would be men from every district of the Thronðhjem country, and then they would give their determination upon this difficult matter.

16. ABOUT SACRIFICES.

Sigurd, earl of Hlader, was one of the greatest men for sacrifices, and so had Hakon his father been; and Sigurd always presided on account of the king at all the festivals of sacrifice in the Thronðhjem country. It was an old custom, that when there was to be sacrifice all the bondes should come to the spot where the temple stood and bring with them all that they required while the festival of the sacrifice lasted. To this festival all the men brought ale with them; and all kinds of cattle, as well as horses, were slaughtered, and all the blood that came from them was called "hlaut", and the vessels in which it was collected were called hlaut-vessels. Hlaut-staves were made, like sprinkling brushes, with which the whole of the altars and the temple walls, both outside and inside, were sprinkled over, and also the people were sprinkled with the blood; but the flesh was boiled into savoury meat for those present. The fire was in the middle of the floor of the temple, and over it hung the kettles, and the full goblets were handed across the fire; and he who made the feast, and was a chief, blessed the full goblets, and all the meat of the sacrifice. And first Odin's goblet was emptied for victory and power to his king; thereafter, Niord's and Freyja's goblets for peace and a good season. Then it was the custom of many to empty the brage-goblet; and then the guests emptied a goblet to the memory of departed friends, called the remembrance goblet. Sigurd the earl was an open-handed man, who did what was very much celebrated; namely, he made a great sacrifice festival at Hlader of which he paid all the expenses. Kormak Ogmundson sings of it in his ballad of Sigurd:—

Of cup or platter need has none
The guest who seeks the generous one,—
Sigurd the Generous, who can trace
His lineage from the giant race;
For Sigurd's hand is bounteous, free,—
The guardian of the temples he.
He loves the gods, his liberal hand
Scatters his sword's gains o'er the land—

17. THE FROSTA-THING.

King Hakon came to the Frosta-thing, at which a vast multitude of people were assembled. And when the Thing was seated, the king spoke to the people, and began his speech with saying,—it was his message and entreaty to the bondes and householding men, both great and small, and to the whole public in general, young and old, rich and poor, women as well as men, that they should all allow themselves to be baptized, and should believe in one God, and in Christ the son of Mary and refrain from all sacrifices and heathen gods; and should keep holy the seventh day, and abstain from all work on it, and keep a fast on the seventh day. As soon as the king had proposed this to the bondes, great was the murmur and noise among the crowd. They complained that the king wanted to take their labour and their old faith from them, and the land could not be cultivated in that way. The labouring men and slaves thought that they could not work if they did not get meat; and they said it was the character of King Hakon, and his father, and all the family, to be generous enough with their money, but sparing with their diet. Asbjorn of Medalhus in the Gaulardal stood up, and answered thus to the king's proposal:—

"We bondes, King Hakon, when we elected thee to be our king, and got back our udal rights at the Thing held in Thronðhjem, thought we had got into heaven; but now we don't know whether we have really got back our freedom, or whether thou wishest to make vassals of us again by this extraordinary proposal that we should abandon the ancient faith which our fathers and forefathers have held from the oldest times, in the times when the dead were burnt, as well as since that they are laid under mounds, and which, although they were braver than the people of our days, has served us as a faith to the present time. We have also held thee so dear, that we have allowed thee to rule and give law and right to all the country. And even now we bondes will unanimously hold by the law which thou givest us here in the Frosta-thing, and to which we have also given our assent; and we will follow thee, and have thee for our king, as long as there is a living man among us bondes here in this Thing assembled. But thou, king, must use some moderation towards us, and only require from us such things as we can obey thee in, and are not impossible for us. If, however, thou wilt take up this matter with a high hand, and wilt try thy power and strength against us, we bondes have resolved among ourselves to part with thee, and to take to ourselves some other chief, who will so conduct himself towards us that we can freely and safely enjoy that faith that suits our own inclinations. Now, king, thou must choose one or other of these conditions before the Thing is ended."

The bondes gave loud applause to this speech, and said it expressed their will, and they would stand or fall by what had been spoken. When silence was again restored, Earl Sigurd said, "It is King Hakon's will to give way to you, the bondes, and never to separate himself from your friendship." The bondes replied, that it was their desire that the king should offer a sacrifice for peace and a good year, as his father was want to do; and thereupon the noise and tumult ceased, and the Thing was concluded. Earl Sigurd spoke to the king afterwards, and advised him not to refuse altogether to do as the people desired, saying there was nothing else for it but to give way to the will of the bondes; "for it is, as thou hast heard thyself, the will and earnest desire of the head-people, as well as of the multitude. Hereafter we may find a good way to manage it." And in this resolution the king and earl agreed (A.D. 950).

18. KING HAKON OFFERS SACRIFICES.

The harvest thereafter, towards the winter season, there was a festival of sacrifice at Hlader, and the king came to it. It had always been his custom before, when he was present at a place where there was sacrifice, to take his meals in a little house by himself, or with some few of his men; but the bondes grumbled that he did not seat himself in his high-seat at these the most joyous of the meetings of the people. The earl said that the king should do so this time. The king accordingly sat upon his high-seat. Now when the first full goblet was filled, Earl Sigurd spoke some words over it, blessed it in Odin's name, and drank to the king out of the horn; and the king then took it, and made the sign of the cross over it. Then said Kar of Gryting, "What does the king mean by doing so? Will he not sacrifice?" Earl Sigurd replies, "The king is doing what all of you do, who trust to your power and strength. He is blessing the full goblet in the name of Thor, by making the sign of his hammer over it before he drinks it." On this there was quietness for the evening. The next day, when the people sat down to table, the bondes pressed the king strongly to eat of horse-flesh; and as he would on no account do so, they wanted him to drink of the soup; and as he would not do this, they insisted he should at least taste the gravy; and on his refusal they were going to lay hands on him. Earl Sigurd came and made peace among them, by asking the king to hold his mouth over the handle of the kettle, upon which the fat smoke of the boiled horse-flesh had settled itself; and the king first laid a linen cloth over the handle, and then gaped over it, and returned to the high-seat; but neither party was satisfied with this.

19. FEAST OF THE SACRIFICE AT MORE.

The winter thereafter the king prepared a Yule feast in More, and eight chiefs resolved with each other to meet at it. Four of them were from without the Thronthjem district—namely, Kar of Gryting, Asbjorn of Medalhus, Thorberg of Varnes, and Orm from Ljoxa; and from the Thronthjem district, Botolf of Olvishaug, Narfe of Staf in Veradal, Thrand Hak from Egg, and Thorer Skeg from Husaby in Eyin Idre. These eight men bound themselves, the four first to root out Christianity in Norway, and the four others to oblige the king to offer sacrifice to the gods. The four first went in four ships southwards to More, and killed three priests, and burnt three churches, and then they returned. Now, when King Hakon and Earl Sigurd came to More with their court, the bondes assembled in great numbers; and immediately, on the first day of the feast, the bondes insisted hard with the king that he should offer sacrifice, and threatened him with violence if he refused. Earl Sigurd tried to make peace between them, and brought it so far that the king took some bits of horse-liver, and emptied all the goblets the bondes filled for him without the sign of the cross; but as soon as the feast was over, the king and the earl returned to Hlader. The king was very ill pleased, and made himself ready to leave Thronthjem forthwith with all his people; saying that the next time he came to Thronthjem, he would come with such strength of men-at-arms that he would repay the bondes for their enmity towards him. Earl Sigurd entreated the king not to take it amiss of the bondes; adding, that it was not wise to threaten them, or to make war upon the people within the country, and especially in the Thronthjem district, where the strength of the land lay; but the king was so enraged that he would not listen to a word from anybody. He went out from Thronthjem, and proceeded south to More, where he remained the rest of the winter, and on to the spring season (A.D. 950); and when summer came he assembled men, and the report was that he intended with this army to attack the Thronthjem people.

20. BATTLE AT OGVALDSNES.

But just as the king had embarked with a great force of troops, the news was brought him from the south of the country, that King Eirik's sons had come from Denmark to Viken and had driven King Trygve Olafson from his ships at Sotanes, and then had plundered far and wide around in Viken, and that many had submitted to them. Now when King Hakon heard this news, he thought that help was needed; and he sent word to Earl Sigurd, and to the other chiefs from whom he could expect help, to hasten to his assistance. Sigurd the earl came accordingly with a great body of men, among whom were all the Thronthjem people who had set upon him the hardest to offer sacrifice; and all made their peace with the king, by the earl's persuasion. Now King Hakon sailed south along the coast; and when he came south as far as Stad, he heard that Eirik's sons were come to North Agder. Then they advanced against each other, and met at Kormt. Both parties left their ships there, and gave battle at Ogvaldsnes. Both parties had a great force, and it was a great battle. King Hakon went forward bravely, and King Guthorm Eirikson met him with his troop, and they exchanged blows with each other. Guthorm fell, and his standard was cut down. Many people fell around him. The army of Eirik's sons then took flight to their ships and rowed away with the loss of many a man. So says Guthorm Sindre:—

The king's voice waked the silent host
Who slept beside the wild sea-coast,
And bade the song of spear and sword
Over the battle plain be heard.
Where heroes' shields the loudest rang,
Where loudest was the sword-blade's clang,
By the sea-shore at Kormt Sound,
Hakon felled Guthorm to the ground.

Now King Hakon returned to his ships, and pursued Gunhild's sons. And both parties sailed all they could sail, until they came to East Adger, from whence Eirik's sons set out to sea, and southwards for Jutland (A.D. 950). Guthorm Sindre speaks of it in his song:—

And Guthorm's brothers too, who know
So skilfully to bend the bow,

The conquering hand must also feel
Of Hakon, god of the bright steel,—
The sun-god, whose bright rays, that dart
Flame-like, are swords that pierce the heart.
Well I remember how the King
Hakon, the battle's life and spring,
O'er the wide ocean cleared away
Eirik's brave sons. They durst not stay,
But round their ships' sides hung their shields
And fled across the blue sea-fields.

King Hakon returned then northwards to Norway, but Eirik's sons remained a long time in Denmark.

21. KING HAKON'S LAWS.

King Hakon after this battle made a law, that all inhabited land over the whole country along the sea-coast, and as far back from it as the salmon swims up in the rivers, should be divided into ship-raths according to the districts; and it was fixed by law how many ships there should be from each district, and how great each should be, when the whole people were called out on service. For this outfit the whole inhabitants should be bound whenever a foreign army came to the country. With this came also the order that beacons should be erected upon the hills, so that every man could see from the one to the other; and it is told that a war-signal could thus be given in seven days, from the most southerly beacon to the most northerly Thing-seat in Halogaland

22. CONCERNING EIRIK'S SONS.

Eirik's sons plundered much on the Baltic coasts and sometimes, as before related, in Norway; but so long as Hakon ruled over Norway there was in general good peace, and good seasons, and he was the most beloved of kings. When Hakon had reigned about twenty years in Norway (A.D. 954), Eirik's sons came from Denmark with a powerful army, of which a great part consisted of the people who had followed them on their expeditions; but a still greater army of Danes had been placed at their disposal by King Harald Gormson. They sailed with a fair wind from Vendil, and came to Agder; and then sailed northwards, night and day, along the coast. But the beacons were not fired, because it had been usual to look for them lighted from the east onwards, and nobody had observed them from the east coast; and besides King Hakon had set heavy penalties for giving false alarm, by lighting the beacons without occasion. The reason of this was, that ships of war and vikings cruised about and plundered among the outlying islands, and the country people took them for Eirik's sons, and lighted the beacons, and set the whole country in trouble and dread of war. Sometimes, no doubt, the sons of Eirik were there; but having only their own troops, and no Danish army with them, they returned to Denmark; and sometimes these were other vikings. King Hakon was very angry at this, because it cost both trouble and money to no purpose. The bondes also suffered by these false alarms when they were given uselessly; and thus it happened that no news of this expedition of Eirik's sons circulated through the land until they had come as far north as Ulfa-sund, where they lay for seven days. Then spies set off across Eid and northwards to More. King Hakon was at that time in the island Frede, in North More, at a place called Birkistrand, where he had a dwelling-house, and had no troops with him, only his body-guard or court, and the neighbouring bondes he had invited to his house.

23. OF EGIL ULSEK.

The spies came to King Hakon, and told him that Eirik's sons, with a great army, lay just to the south of Stad. Then he called together the most understanding of the men about him, and asked their opinion, whether he should fight with Eirik's sons, although they had such a great multitude with them, or should set off northwards to gather together more men. Now there was a bonde there, by name Egil Ulserk, who was a very old man, but in former days had been strong and stout beyond most men, and a hardy man-at-arms withal, having long carried King Harald Harfager's banner. Egil answered thus to the king's speech,—“I was in several battles with thy father Harald the king, and he gave battle sometimes with many, sometimes with few people; but he always came off with

victory. Never did I hear him ask counsel of his friends whether he should fly—and neither shalt thou get any such counsel from us, king; but as we know we have a brave leader, thou shalt get a trusty following from us." Many others agreed with this speech, and the king himself declared he was most inclined to fight with such strength as they could gather. It was so determined. The king split up a war-arrow, which he sent off in all directions, and by that token a number of men was collected in all haste. Then said Egil Ulserk,—“At one time the peace had lasted so long I was afraid I might come to die the death of old age, within doors upon a bed of straw, although I would rather fall in battle following my chief. And now it may so turn out in the end as I wished it to be.”

24. BATTLE AT FREDARBERG.

Eirik's sons sailed northwards around Stad; as soon as the wind suited; and when they had passed it, and heard where King Hakon was, they sailed to meet him. King Hakon had nine ships, with which he lay under Fredarberg in Feesund; and Eirik's sons had twenty ships, with which they brought up on the south side of the same cape, in Feesund. King Hakon sent them a message, asking them to go upon the land; and telling them that he had hedged in with hazel boughs a place of combat at Rastarkalf, where there is a flat large field, at the foot of a long and rather low ridge. Then Eirik's sons left their ships, and went northwards over the neck of land within Fredarberg, and onward to Rastarkalf. Then Egil asked King Hakon to give him ten men with ten banners, and the king did so. Then Egil went with his men under the ridge; but King Hakon went out upon the open field with his army, and set up his banner, and drew up his army, saying, "Let us draw up in a long line, that they may not surround us, as they have the most men." And so it was done; and there was a severe battle, and a very sharp attack. Then Egil Ulserk set up the ten banners he had with him, and placed the men who carried them so that they should go as near the summit of the ridge as possible, and leaving a space between each of them. They went so near the summit that the banners could be seen over it, and moved on as if they were coming behind the army of Eirik's sons. Now when the men who stood uppermost in the line of the troops of Eirik's sons saw so many flying banners advancing high over the edge of the ridge, they supposed a great force must be following, who would come behind their army, and between them and their ships. They made each other acquainted with what was going on in a loud shout, and the whole took to flight; and when the king saw it, they fled with the rest. King Hakon now pushes on briskly with his people, pursuing the flying, and killing many.

25. OF KING GAMLE.

When Gamle Eirikson came up the ridge of the hill he turned round, and he observed that not more people were following than his men had been engaged with already, and he saw it was but a stratagem of war; so he ordered the war-horns to be blown, his banner to be set up, and he put his men in battle order. On this, all his Northmen stood, and turned with him, but the Danes fled to the ships; and when King Hakon and his men came thither, there was again sharp conflict; but now Hakon had most people. At last the Eirik's sons' force fled, and took the road south about the hill; but a part of their army retreated upon the hill southwards, followed by King Hakon. There is a flat field east of the ridge which runs westward along the range of hills, and is bounded on its west side by a steep ridge. Gamle's men retreated towards this ground; but Hakon followed so closely that he killed some, and others ran west over the ridge, and were killed on that side of it. King Hakon did not part with them till the last man of them was killed.

26. KING GAMLE AND ULSERK FALL.

Gamle Eirikson fled from the ridge down upon the plain to the south of the hill. There he turned himself again, and waited until more people gathered to him. All his brothers, and many troops of their men, assembled there. Egil Ulserk was in front, and in advance of Hakon's men, and made a stout attack. He and King Gamle exchanged blows with each other, and King Gamle got a grievous wound; but Egil fell, and many people with him. Then

came Hakon the king with the troops which had followed him, and a new battle began. King Hakon pushed on, cutting down men on both sides of him, and killing the one upon the top of the other. So sings Guthorm Sindre:—

Scared by the sharp sword's singing sound,
Brandished in air, the foe gave ground.
The boldest warrior cannot stand
Before King Hakon's conquering hand;
And the king's banner ever dies
Where the spear-forests thickest rise.
Altho' the king had gained of old
Enough of Freyja's tears of gold,
He spared himself no more than tho'
He'd had no well-filled purse to show.

When Eirik's sons saw their men falling all round, they turned and fled to their ships; but those who had sought the ships before had pushed off some of them from the land, while some of them were still hauled up and on the strand. Now the sons of Eirik and their men plunged into the sea, and betook themselves to swimming. Gamle Eirikson was drowned; but the other sons of Eirik reached their ships, and set sail with what men remained. They steered southwards to Denmark, where they stopped a while, very ill satisfied with their expedition.

27. EGIL ULSERK'S BURIAL-GROUND.

King Hakon took all the ships of the sons of Eirik that had been left upon the strand, and had them drawn quite up, and brought on the land. Then he ordered that Egil Ulserk, and all the men of his army who had fallen, should be laid in the ships, and covered entirely over with earth and stones. King Hakon made many of the ships to be drawn up to the field of battle, and the hillocks over them are to be seen to the present day a little to the south of Fredarberg. At the time when King Hakon was killed, when Glum Geirason, in his song, boasted of King Hakon's fall, Eyvind Skaldaspiller composed these verses on this battle:—

Our dauntless king with Gamle's gore
Sprinkled his bright sword o'er and o'er:
Sprinkled the gag that holds the mouth
Of the fell demon Fenriswolf.
Proud swelled our warriors' hearts when he
Drove Eirik's sons out to the sea,
With all their Guatland host: but now
Our warriors weep—Hakon lies low!

High standing stones mark Egil Ulserk's grave.

28. NEWS OF WAR COMES TO KING HAKON.

When King Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, had been king for twenty-six years after his brother Eirik had left the country, it happened (A.D. 960) that he was at a feast in Hordaland in the house at Fitjar on the island Stord, and he had with him at the feast his court and many of the peasants. And just as the king was seated at the supper-table, his watchmen who were outside observed many ships coming sailing along from the south, and not very far from the island. Now, said the one to the other, they should inform the king that they thought an armed force was coming against them; but none thought it advisable to be the bearer of an alarm of war to the king, as he had set heavy penalties on those who raised such alarms falsely, yet they thought it unsuitable that the king should remain in ignorance of what they saw. Then one of them went into the room and asked Eyvind Finson to come out as fast as possible, for it was very needful. Eyvind immediately came out and went to where he could see the ships, and saw directly that a great army was on the way; and he returned in all haste into the room, and, placing himself before the kind, said, "Short is the hour for acting, and long the hour for feasting." The king cast his eyes upon him, and said, "What now is in the way?" Eyvind said—

Up king! the avengers are at hand!
Eirik's bold sons approach the land!
The Judgment of the sword they crave
Against their foe. Thy wrath I brave;
Tho' well I know 'tis no light thing
To bring war-tidings to the king
And tell him 'tis no time to rest.
Up! gird your armour to your breast:

Thy honour's dearer than my life;
Therefore I say, up to the strife!

Then said the king, "Thou art too brave a fellow, Eyvind, to bring us any false alarm of war." The others all said it was a true report. The king ordered the tables to be removed, and then he went out to look at the ships; and when it could be clearly seen that these were ships of war, the king asked his men what resolution they should take—whether to give battle with the men they had, or go on board ship and sail away northwards along the land. "For it is easy to see," said he, "that we must now fight against a much greater force than we ever had against us before; although we thought just the same the last time we fought against Gunhild's sons." No one was in a hurry to give an answer to the king; but at last Eyvind replied to the king's speech:—

Thou who in the battle-plain
Hast often poured the sharp spear-rain!
Ill it beseems our warriors brave
To fly upon the ocean wave:
To fly upon the blue wave north,
When Harald from the south comes forth,
With many a ship riding in pride
Upon the foaming ocean-tide;
With many a ship and southern viking,—
Let us take shield in hand, brave king!

The king replied, "Thy counsel, Eyvind, is manly, and after my own heart; but I will hear the opinion of others upon this matter." Now as the king's men thought they discerned what way the king was inclined to take, they answered that they would rather fall bravely and like men, than fly before the Danes; adding, that they had often gained the victory against greater odds of numbers. The king thanked them for their resolution, and bade them arm themselves; and all the men did so. The king put on his armour, and girded on his sword Kvernbit, and put a gilt helmet upon his head, and took a spear (Kesja) in his hand, and a shield by his side. He then drew up his courtmen and the bondes in one body, and set up his banner.

29. THE ARMAMENT OF EIRIK'S SONS.

After Gamle's death King Harald, Eirik's son, was the chief of the brothers, and he had a great army with him from Denmark. In their army were also their mother's brothers,—Eyvind Skreyja, and Alf Askman, both strong and able men, and great man slayers. The sons of Eirik brought up with their ships off the island, and it is said that their force was not less than six to one,—so much stronger in men were Eirik's sons.

30. KING HAKON'S BATTLE ARRAY.

When King Hakon had drawn up his men, it is told of him that he threw off his armour before the battle began. So sings Eyvind Skaldaspiller, in Hakmarmal:—

They found Blorn's brother bold
Under his banner as of old,
Ready for battle. Foes advance,—
The front rank raise the shining lance:
And now begins the bloody fray!
Now! now begins Hild's wild play!
Our noble king, whose name strikes fear
Into each Danish heart,—whose spear
Has single-handed spilt the blood
Of many a Danish noble,—stood
Beneath his helmet's eagle wing
Amidst his guards; but the brave king
Scorned to wear armour, while his men
Bared naked breasts against the rain
Of spear and arrow, his breast-plate rung
Against the stones; and, blithe and gay,
He rushed into the thickest fray.
With golden helm, and naked breast,
Brave Hakon played at slaughter's feast.

King Hakon selected willingly such men for his guard or courtmen as were distinguished for their strength and bravery, as his father King Harald also used to do; and among these was Thoralf Skolmson the Strong, who went on one side of the king. He had helmet and shield, spear and sword; and his sword was called by the name of Footbreadth. It was said that Thoralf and King Hakon were equal in strength. Thord Sjarekson speaks of it in the poem he composed concerning Thoralf:—

The king's men went with merry words
To the sharp clash of shields and flame swords,
When these wild rovers of the sea
At Fitlar fought. Stout Thoralf he
Next to the Northmen's hero came,
Scattering wide round the battle flame
For in the storm of shields not one
Ventured like him with brave Hakon.

When both lines met there was a hard combat, and much bloodshed. The combatants threw their spears and then drew their swords. Then King Hakon, and Thoralf with him, went in advance of the banner, cutting down on both sides of them. So says Eyvind Skaldaspiller:—

The body-coats of naked steel,
The woven iron coats of mail,
Like water fly before the swing
Of Hakon's sword—the champion-king.
About each Gotland war-man's head
Helm splits, like ice beneath the tread,
Cloven by the axe or sharp swordblade,
The brave king, foremost in the fight,
Dyes crimson-red the spotless white
Of his bright shield with foemen's gore,—
Amidst the battle's wild uproar,
Wild pealing round from shore to shore.

31. FALL OF SKREYJA AND ASKMAN.

King Hakon was very conspicuous among other men, and also when the sun shone his helmet glanced, and thereby many weapons were directed at him. Then Eyvind Finson took a hat and put it over the king's helmet. Now Eyvind Skreyja called out, "Does the king of the Norsemen hide himself, or has he fled? Where is now the golden helmet?" Then Eyvind, and his brother Alf with him, pushed on like fools or madmen. King Hakon shouted to Eyvind, "Come on as thou art coming, and thou shalt find the king of the Norsemen." So says Eyvind Skaldaspiller:—

The raiser of the storm of shields,
The conqueror in battle fields,—
Hakon the brave, the warrior's friend,
Who scatters gold with liberal hand,
Heard Skreyja's taunt, and saw him rush,
Amidst the sharp spears' thickest push,
And loudly shouted in reply—
'If thou wilt for the victory try,
The Norseman's king thou soon shalt find!
Hold onwards, friend! Hast thou a mind!

It was also but a short space of time before Eyvind did come up swinging his sword, and made a cut at the king; but Thoralf thrust his shield so hard against Eyvind that he tottered with the shock. Now the king takes his sword Kvernbit with both hands, and hewed Eyvind through helm and head, and clove him down to the shoulders. Thoralf also slew Alf Askman. So says Eyvind Skaldaspiller:—

With both his hands the gallant king
Swung round his sword, and to the chin
Clove Eyvind down: his faithless mail
Against it could no more avail,
Than the thin plank against the shock
When the ship's side beats on the rock.
By his bright sword with golden haft
Thro' helm, and head, and hair, was cleft
The Danish champion; and amain,
With terror smitten, fled his men.

After this fall of the two brothers, King Hakon pressed on so hard that all men gave way before his assault. Now fear came over the army of Eirik's sons, and the men began to fly; and King Hakon, who was at the head of his men, pressed on the flying, and hewed down oft and hard. Then flew an arrow, one of the kind called "flein", into Hakon's arm, into the muscles below the shoulder; and it is said by many people that Gunhild's shoe-boy, whose name was Kisping, ran out and forwards amidst the confusion of arms, called out "Make room for the king-killer," and shot King Hakon with the flein. Others again say that nobody could tell who shot the king, which is indeed the most likely; for spears, arrows, and all kinds of missiles flew as thick as a snow-drift. Many of the people of Eirik's sons were killed, both on the field of battle and on the way to the ships, and also on the strand, and many threw themselves into the water. Many also, among whom were Eirik's

sons, got on board their ships, and rowed away as fast as they could, and Hakon's men after them. So says Thord Sjarekson:—

The wolf, the murderer, and the thief,
Fled from before the people's chief:
Few breakers of the peace grew old
Under the Northmen's king so bold.
When gallant Hakon lost his life
Black was the day, and dire the strife.
It was bad work for Gunhild's sons,
Leading their pack of Hungry Danes
From out the south, to have to fly,
And many a bonde leave to die,
Leaning his heavy wounded head
On the oar-bench for feather-bed.
Thoralf was nearest to the side
Of gallant Hakon in the tide
Of battle; his the sword that best
Carved out the raven's bloody feast:
Amidst the heaps of foemen slain
He was named bravest on the plain.

32. HAKON'S DEATH.

When King Hakon came out to his ship he had his wound bound up; but the blood ran from it so much and so constantly, that it could not be stopped; and when the day was drawing to an end his strength began to leave him. Then he told his men that he wanted to go northwards to his house at Alreksstader; but when he came north, as far as Hakonarhella Hill, they put in towards the land, for by this time the king was almost lifeless. Then he called his friends around him, and told them what he wished to be done with regard to his kingdom. He had only one child, a daughter, called Thora, and had no son. Now he told them to send a message to Eirik's sons, that they should be kings over the country; but asked them to hold his friends in respect and honour. "And if fate," added he, "should prolong my life, I will, at any rate, leave the country, and go to a Christian land, and do penance for what I have done against God; but should I die in heathen land, give me any burial you think fit." Shortly afterwards Hakon expired, at the little hill on the shore-side at which he was born. So great was the sorrow over Hakon's death, that he was lamented both by friends and enemies; and they said that never again would Norway see such a king. His friends removed his body to Saeheim, in North Hordaland, and made a great mound, in which they laid the king in full armour and in his best clothes, but with no other goods. They spoke over his grave, as heathen people are used to do, and wished him in Valhal. Eyvind Skaldaspiller composed a poem on the death of King Hakon, and on how well he was received in Valhal. The poem is called "Hakonarnal":—

In Odin's hall an empty place
Stands for a king of Yngve's race;
'Go, my valkyries,' Odin said,
'Go forth, my angels of the dead,
Gondul and Skogul, to the plain
Drenched with the battle's bloody rain,
And to the dying Hakon tell,
Here in Valhal shall he dwell.'
'At Stord, so late a lonely shore,
Was heard the battle's wild uproar;
The lightning of the flashing sword
Burned fiercely at the shore of Stord.
From levelled halberd and spearhead
Life-blood was dropping fast and red;
And the keen arrows' biting sleet
Upon the shore at Stord fast beat.
'Upon the thundering cloud of shield
Flashed bright the sword-storm o'er the field;
And on the plate-mail rattled loud
The arrow-shower's rushing cloud,
In Odin's tempest-weather, there
Swift whistling through the angry air;
And the spear-torrents swept away
Ranks of brave men from light of day.
'With batter'd shield, and blood-smear'd sword
Slits one beside the shore of Stord,
With armour crushed and gashed sits he,
A grim and ghastly sight to see;
And round about in sorrow stand
The warriors of his gallant band:
Because the king of Dags' old race
In Odin's hall must fill a place.
'Then up spake Gondul, standing near
Resting upon her long ash spear,—
'Hakon! the gods' cause prospers well,
And thou in Odin's halls shalt dwell!'

The king beside the shore of Stord
The speech of the valkyrie heard,
Who sat there on his coal-black steed,
With shield on arm and helm on head.
'Thoughtful, said Hakon, 'Tell me why
Ruler of battles, victory
Is so dealt out on Stord's red plain?
Have we not well deserved to gain?'
'And is it not as well dealt out?'
Said Gondul, 'Hearest thou not the shout?
The field is cleared—the foemen run—
The day is ours—the battle won!'—
'Then Skogul said, 'My coal-black steed,
Home to the gods I now must speed,
To their green home, to tell the tiding
That Hakon's self is thither riding.'
To Hermod and to Brage then
Said Odin, 'Here, the first of men,
Brave Hakon comes, the Norsemen's king,—
Go forth, my welcome to him bring.'
'Fresh from the battle-field came in,
Dripping with blood, the Norsemen's king.
'Methinks,' said he, great Odin's will
Is harsh, and bodes me further ill;
Thy son from off the field to-day
From victory to snatch away!'—
But Odin said, 'Be thine the joy
Valhal gives, my own brave boy!'—
'And Brage said, 'Eight brothers here
Welcome thee to Valhal's cheer,
To drain the cup, or fights repeat
Where Hakon Eirik's earls beat.'
Quoth the stout king, 'And shall my gear,
Helm, sword, and mail-coat, axe and spear,
Be still at hand! 'Tis good to hold
Fast by our trusty friends of old.'
'Well was it seen that Hakon still
Had saved the temples from all ill;
For the whole council of the gods
Welcomed the king to their abodes.
Happy the day when men are born
Like Hakon, who all base things scorn.—
Win from the brave and honoured name,
And die amidst an endless fame.
'Sooner shall Fenriswolf devour
The race of man from shore to shore,
Than such a grace to kingly crown
As gallant Hakon want renown.
Life, land, friends, riches, all will fly,
And we in slavery shall sigh.
But Hakon in the blessed abodes
For ever lives with the bright gods.

SAGA OF KING HARALD GRAFELD AND OF EARL HAKON SON OF SIGURD.

1. GOVERNMENT OF THE SONS OF EIRIK.

When King Hakon was killed, the sons of Eirik took the sovereignty of Norway. Harald, who was the oldest of the living brothers, was over them in dignity. Their mother Gunhild, who was called the King-mother, mixed herself much in the affairs of the country. There were many chiefs in the land at that time. There was Trygve Olafson in the Eastland, Gudrod Bjornson in Vestfold, Sigurd earl of Hlader in the Thronhjem land; but Gunhild's sons held the middle of the country the first winter. There went messages and ambassadors between Gunhild's sons and Trygve and Gudrod, and all was settled upon the footing that they should hold from Gunhild's sons the same part of the country which they formerly had held under King Hakon. A man called Glum Geirason, who was King Harald's skald, and was a very brave man, made this song upon King Hakon's death:—

Gamle is avenged by Harald!
Great is thy deed, thou champion bold!
The rumour of it came to me
In distant lands beyond the sea,
How Harald gave King Hakon's blood
To Odin's ravens for their food.

This song was much favoured. When Eyvind Finson heard of it he composed the song which was given before, viz.:—

Our dauntless king with Gamle's gore
Sprinkled his bright sword o'er and o'er, &c.

This song also was much favoured, and was spread widely abroad; and when King Harald came to hear of it, he laid a charge against Eyvind affecting his life; but friends made up the quarrel, on the condition that Eyvind should in future be Harald's skald, as he had formerly been King Hakon's. There was also some relationship between them, as Gunhild, Eyvind's mother, was a daughter of Earl Halfdan, and her mother was Ingibjorg, a daughter of Harald Harfager. Thereafter Eyvind made a song about King Harald:—

Guardian of Norway, well we know
Thy heart failed not when from the bow
The piercing arrow-hail sharp rang
On shield and breast-plate, and the clang
Of sword resounded in the press
Of battle, like the splitting ice;
For Harald, wild wolf of the wood,
Must drink his fill of foeman's blood.

Gunhild's sons resided mostly in the middle of the country, for they did not think it safe for them to dwell among the people of Thronthjem or of Viken, where King Hakon's best friends lived; and also in both places there were many powerful men. Proposals of agreement then passed between Gunhild's sons and Earl Sigurd, or they got no scat from the Thronthjem country; and at last an agreement was concluded between the kings and the earl, and confirmed by oath. Earl Sigurd was to get the same power in the Thronthjem land which he had possessed under King Hakon, and on that they considered themselves at peace. All Gunhild's sons had the character of being penurious; and it was said they hid their money in the ground. Eyvind Skaldaspiller made a song about this:—

Main-mast of battle! Harald bold!
In Hakon's days the skald wore gold
Upon his falcon's seat; he wore
Rolf Krake's seed, the yellow ore
Sown by him as he fled away,
The avenger Adils' speed to stay,
The gold crop grows upon the plain;
But Frode's girls so gay in vain
Grind out the golden meal, while those
Who rule o'er Norway's realm like foes,
In mother earth's old bosom hide
The wealth which Hakon far and wide
Scattered with generous hand: the sun
Shone in the days of that great one,
On the gold band of Fulla's brow,
On gold-ringed hands that bend the bow,
On the skald's hand; but of the ray
Of bright gold, glancing like the spray
Of sun-lit waves, no skald now sings—
Buried are golden chains and rings.

Now when King Harald heard this song, he sent a message to Eyvind to come to him, and when Eyvind came made a charge against him of being unfaithful. "And it ill becomes thee," said the king, "to be my enemy, as thou hast entered into my service." Eyvind then made these verses:—

One lord I had before thee, Harald!
One dear-loved lord! Now am I old,
And do not wish to change again,—
To that loved lord, through strife and pain,
Faithful I stood; still true to Hakon,—
To my good king, and him alone.
But now I'm old and useless grown,
My hands are empty, wealth is flown;
I am but fir for a short space
In thy court-hall to fill a place.

But King Harald forced Eyvind to submit himself to his clemency. Eyvind had a great gold ring, which was called Molde, that had been dug up out of the earth long since. This ring the King said he must have as the mulet for the offence; and there was no help for it. Then Eyvind sang:—

I go across the ocean-foam,
Swift skating to my Iceland home
Upon the ocean-skates, fast driven
By gales by Thurse's witch fire given.
For from the falcon-bearing hand
Harald has plucked the gold snake band
My father wore—by lawless might
Has taken what is mine by right.

Eyvind went home; but it is not told that he ever came near the king again.

2. CHRISTIANITY OF GUNHILD'S SONS.

Gunhild's sons embraced Christianity in England, as told before; but when they came to rule over Norway they made no progress in spreading Christianity—only they pulled down the temples of the idols, and cast away the sacrifices where they had it in their power, and raised great animosity by doing so. The good crops of the country were soon wasted in their days, because there were many kings, and each had his court about him. They had therefore great expenses, and were very greedy. Besides, they only observed those laws of King Hakon which suited themselves. They were, however, all of them remarkably handsome men—stout, strong, and expert in all exercises. So says Glum Geirason, in the verses he composed about Harald, Gunhild's son:—

The foeman's terror, Harald bold,
Had gained enough of yellow gold;
Had Heimdal's teeth enough in store,
And understood twelve arts or more.

The brothers sometimes went out on expeditions together, and sometimes each on his own account. They were fierce, but brave and active; and great warriors, and very successful.

3. COUNCILS BY GUNHILD AND HER SONS.

Gunhild the King-mother, and her sons, often met, and talked together upon the government of the country. Once Gunhild asked her sons what they intended to do with their kingdom of Thronthjem. "Ye have the title of king, as your forefathers had before you; but ye have little land or people, and there are many to divide with. In the East, at Viken, there are Trygve and Gudrod; and they have some right, from relationship, to their governments. There is besides Earl Sigurd ruling over the whole Thronthjem country; and no reason can I see why ye let so large a kingdom be ruled by an earl, and not by yourselves. It appears wonderful to me that ye go every summer upon viking cruises against other lands, and allow an earl within the country to take your father's heritage from you. Your grandfather, whose name you bear, King Harald, thought it but a small matter to take an earl's life and land when he subdued all Norway, and held it under him to old age."

Harald replied, "It is not so easy, mother, to cut off Earl Sigurd as to slay a kid or a calf. Earl Sigurd is of high birth, powerful in relations, popular, and prudent; and I think if the Thronthjem people knew for certain there was enmity between us, they would all take his side, and we could expect only evil from them. I don't think it would be safe for any of us brothers to fall into the hands of the Thronthjem people."

Then said Gunhild, "We shall go to work another way, and not put ourselves forward. Harald and Erling shall come in harvest to North More, and there I shall meet you, and we shall consult together what is to be done." This was done.

4. GUNHILD'S SONS AND GRJOTGARD.

Earl Sigurd had a brother called Grjotgard, who was much younger, and much less respected; in fact, was held in no title of honour. He had many people, however, about him, and in summer went on viking cruises, and gathered to himself property. Now King Harald sent messengers to Thronthjem with offers of friendship, and with presents. The messengers declared that King Harald was willing to be on the same friendly terms with the earl that King Hakon had been; adding, that they wished the earl to come to King Harald, that their friendship might be put on a firm footing. The Earl Sigurd received well the king's messengers and friendly message, but said that on account of his many affairs he could not come to the king. He sent many friendly gifts, and many glad and grateful words to the king, in return for his friendship. With this reply the messengers set off, and went to Grjotgard, for whom they had the same message, and brought him good presents, and offered him King Harald's friendship, and invited him to visit the king. Grjotgard promised to come and at the appointed time he paid a visit to King Harald and Gunhild, and was received in the most friendly manner. They treated him on the most intimate footing, so that Grjotgard had access to their private consultations

and secret councils. At last the conversation, by an understanding between the king and queen, was turned upon Earl Sigurd; and they spoke to Grjotgard about the earl having kept him so long in obscurity, and asked him if he would not join the king's brothers in an attack on the earl. If he would join with them, the king promised Grjotgard that he should be his earl, and have the same government that Sigurd had. It came so far that a secret agreement was made between them, that Grjotgard should spy out the most favourable opportunity of attacking by surprise Earl Sigurd, and should give King Harald notice of it. After this agreement Grjotgard returned home with many good presents from the king.

5. SIGURD BURNT IN A HOUSE IN STJORADAL

Earl Sigurd went in harvest into Stjoradal to guest-quarters, and from thence went to Oglo to a feast. The earl usually had many people about him, for he did not trust the king; but now, after friendly messages had passed between the king and him, he had no great following of people with him. Then Grjotgard sent word to the king that he could never expect a better opportunity to fall upon Earl Sigurd; and immediately, that very evening, Harald and Erling sailed into Thronhjelm fjord with several ships and many people. They sailed all night by starlight, and Grjotgard came out to meet them. Late in the night they came to Oglo, where Earl Sigurd was at the feast, and set fire to the house; and burnt the house, the earl, and all his men. As soon as it was daylight, they set out through the fjord, and south to More, where they remained a long time.

6. HISTORY OF HAKON, SIGURD'S SON.

Hakon, the son of Earl Sigurd, was up in the interior of the Thronhjelm country when he heard this news. Great was the tumult through all the Thronhjelm land, and every vessel that could swim was put into the water; and as soon as the people were gathered together they took Earl Sigurd's son Hakon to be their earl and the leader of the troops, and the whole body steered out of Thronhjelm fjord. When Gunhild's sons heard of this, they set off southwards to Raumsdal and South More; and both parties kept eye on each other by their spies. Earl Sigurd was killed two years after the fall of King Hakon (A.D. 962). So says Eyvind Skaldaspiller in the "Haleygjatal":—

At Oglo, as I've heard, Earl Sigurd
Was burnt to death by Norway's lord,—
Sigurd, who once on Hadding's grave
A feast to Odin's ravens gave.
In Oglo's hall, amidst the feast,
When bowls went round and ale flowed fast,
He perished: Harald lit the fire
Which burnt to death the son of Tyr.

Earl Hakon, with the help of his friends, maintained himself in the Thronhjelm country for three years; and during that time (A.D. 963-965) Gunhild's sons got no revenues from it. Hakon had many a battle with Gunhild's sons, and many a man lost his life on both sides. Of this Einar Skalamaglam speaks in his lay, called "Vellekla," which he composed about Earl Hakon:—

The sharp bow-shooter on the sea
Spread wide his fleet, for well loved he
The battle storm: well loved the earl
His battle-banner to unfurl,
O'er the well-trampled battle-field
He raised the red-moon of his shield;
And often dared King Eirik's son
To try the fray with the Earl Hakon.

And he also says:—

Who is the man who'll dare to say
That Sigurd's son avoids the fray?
He glutts the raven—he ne'er fears
The arrow's song or flight of spears,
With thundering sword he storms in war,
As Odin dreadful; or from far
He makes the arrow-shower fly
To swell the sail of victory.
The victory was dearly bought,
And many a viking-fight was fought
Before the swinger of the sword
Was of the eastern country lord.

And Einar tells also how Earl Hakon avenged his father's murderer:—

I praise the man, my hero he,
Who in his good ship roves the sea,
Like bird of prey, intent to win
Red vengeance for his slaughtered kin.
From his blue sword the iron rain
That freezes life poured down amain
On him who took his father's life,
On him and his men in the strife.
To Odin many a soul was driven,—
To Odin many a rich gift given.
Loud raged the storm on battle-field—
Axe rang on helm, and sword on shield.

The friends on both sides at last laid themselves between, and brought proposals of peace; for the bondes suffered by this strife and war in the land. At last it was brought to this, by the advice of prudent men, that Earl Hakon should have the same power in the Thronhjelm land which his father Earl Sigurd had enjoyed; and the kings, on the other hand, should have the same dominion as King Hakon had: and this agreement was settled with the fullest promises of fidelity to it. Afterwards a great friendship arose between Earl Hakon and Gunhild, although they sometimes attempted to deceive each other. And thus matters stood for three years longer (A.D. 966-968), in which time Earl Hakon sat quietly in his dominions.

7. OF HARALD GRAFELD.

King Hakon had generally his seat in Hordaland and Rogaland, and also his brothers; but very often, also, they went to Hardanger. One summer it happened that a vessel came from Iceland belonging to Icelanders, and loaded with skins and peltry. They sailed to Hardanger, where they heard the greatest number of people assembled; but when the folks came to deal with them, nobody would buy their skins. Then the steersman went to King Harald, whom he had been acquainted with before, and complained of his ill luck. The king promised to visit him, and did so. King Harald was very condescending, and full of fun. He came with a fully manned boat, looked at the skins, and then said to the steersman, "Wilt thou give me a present of one of these gray-skins?" "Willingly," said the steersman, "if it were ever so many." On this the king wrapped himself up in a gray-skin, and went back to his boat; but before they rowed away from the ship, every man in his suite bought such another skin as the king wore for himself. In a few days so many people came to buy skins, that not half of them could be served with what they wanted; and thereafter the king was called Harald Grafeld (Grayskin).

8. EARL EIRIK'S BIRTH.

Earl Hakon came one winter to the Uplands to a feast, and it so happened that he had intercourse with a girl of mean birth. Some time after the girl had to prepare for her confinement, and she bore a child, a boy, who had water poured on him, and was named Eirik. The mother carried the boy to Earl Hakon, and said that he was the father. The earl placed him to be brought up with a man called Thorleif the Wise, who dwelt in Medaldal, and was a rich and powerful man, and a great friend of the earl. Eirik gave hopes very early that he would become an able man, was handsome in countenance, and stout and strong for a child; but the earl did not pay much attention to him. The earl himself was one of the handsomest men in countenance,—not tall, but very strong, and well practised in all kinds of exercises; and withal prudent, of good understanding, and a deadly man at arms.

9. KING TRYGVE OLAFSON'S MURDER.

It happened one harvest (A.D. 962) that Earl Hakon, on a journey in the Uplands, came to Hedemark; and King Trygve Olafson and King Gudrod Bjornson met him there, and Dale-Gudbrand also came to the meeting. They had agreed to meet, and they talked together long by themselves; but so much only was known of their business, that they were to be friends of each other. They parted, and each went home to his own kingdom. Gunhild and her sons came to hear of this meeting, and they suspected it must have been to lay a treasonable plot against the kings; and they often

talked of this among themselves. When spring (A.D. 963) began to set in, King Harald and his brother King Gudrod proclaimed that they were to make a viking cruise, as usual, either in the West sea, or the Baltic. The people accordingly assembled, launched the ships into the sea, and made themselves ready to sail. When they were drinking the farewell ale,—and they drank bravely,—much and many things were talked over at the drink-table, and, among other things, were comparisons between different men, and at last between the kings themselves. One said that King Harald excelled his brothers by far, and in every way. On this King Gudrod was very angry, and said that he was in no respect behind Harald, and was ready to prove it. Instantly both parties were so inflamed that they challenged each other to battle, and ran to their arms. But some of the guests who were less drunk, and had more understanding, came between them, and quieted them; and each went to his ship, but nobody expected that they would all sail together. Gudrod sailed east ward along the land, and Harald went out to sea, saying he would go to the westward; but when he came outside of the islands he steered east along the coast, outside of the rocks and isles. Gudrod, again, sailed inside, through the usual channel, to Viken, and eastwards to Folden. He then sent a message to King Trygve to meet him, that they might make a cruise together in summer in the Baltic to plunder. Trygve accepted willingly, and as a friend, the invitation; and as heard King Gudrod had but few people with him, he came to meet him with a single boat. They met at Veggen, to the east of Sotanes; but just as they were come to the meeting place, Gudrod's men ran up and killed King Trygve and twelve men. He lies buried at a place called Trygve's Cairn (A.D. 963).

10. KING GUDROD'S FALL.

King Harald sailed far outside of the rocks and isles; but set his course to Viken, and came in the night-time to Tunsberg, and heard that Gudrod Bjornson was at a feast a little way up the country. Then King Harald set out immediately with his followers, came in the night, and surrounded the house. King Gudrod Bjornson went out with his people; but after a short resistance he fell, and many men with him. Then King Harald joined his brother King Gudrod, and they subdued all Viken.

11. OF HARALD GRENSKE.

King Gudrod Bjornson had made a good and suitable marriage, and had by his wife a son called Harald, who had been sent to be fostered to Grenland to a lenderman called Hroe the White. Hroe's son, called Hrane Vidforle (the Far-travelled), was Harald's foster-brother, and about the same age. After his father Gudrod's fall, Harald, who was called Grenske, fled to the Uplands, and with him his foster-brother Hrane, and a few people. Harald staid a while there among his relations; but as Eirik's sons sought after every man who interfered with them, and especially those who might oppose them, Harald Grenske's friends and relations advised him to leave the country. Harald therefore went eastward into Svithjod, and sought shipmates, that he might enter into company with those who went out a cruising to gather property. Harald became in this way a remarkably able man. There was a man in Svithjod at that time called Toste, one of the most powerful and clever in the land among those who had no high name or dignity; and he was a great warrior, who had been often in battle, and was therefore called Skoglar-Toste. Harald Grenske came into his company, and cruised with Toste in summer; and wherever Harald came he was well thought of by every one. In the winter Harald, after passing two years in the Uplands, took up his abode with Toste, and lived five years with him. Toste had a daughter, who was both young and handsome, but she was proud and high-minded. She was called Sigrid, and was afterwards married to the Swedish king, Eirik the Victorious, and had a son by him, called Olaf the Swede, who was afterwards king of Svithjod. King Eirik died in a sick-bed at Upsala ten years after the death of Styrbjorn.

12. EARL HAKON'S FEUDS.

Gunhild's sons levied a great army in Viken (A.D. 963), and sailed along the land northwards, collecting people and ships on the way out of every district. They then made known their intent, to proceed northwards with their army against Earl Hakon in Throndhjem. When Earl Hakon heard this news, he also collected men, and fitted out ships; and when he heard what an overwhelming force Gunhild's sons had with them, he steered south with his fleet to More, pillaging wherever he came, and killing many people. He then sent the whole of the bonde army back to Throndhjem; but he himself, with his men-at-arms, proceeded by both the districts of More and Raumsdal, and had his spies out to the south of Stad to spy the army of Gunhild's sons; and when he heard they were come into the Fjords, and were waiting for a fair wind to sail northwards round Stad, Earl Hakon set out to sea from the north side of Stad, so far that his sails could not be seen from the land, and then sailed eastward on a line with the coast, and came to Denmark, from whence he sailed into the Baltic, and pillaged there during the summer. Gunhild's sons conducted their army north to Throndhjem, and remained there the whole summer collecting the scat and duties. But when summer was advanced they left Sigurd Slefa and Gudron behind; and the other brothers returned eastward with the levied army they had taken up in summer.

13. OF EARL HAKON AND GUNHILD'S SONS.

Earl Hakon, towards harvest (A.D. 963), sailed into the Bothnian Gulf to Helsingjaland, drew his ships up there on the beach, and took the land-ways through Helsingjaland and Jamtaland, and so eastwards round the dividing ridge (the Kjol, or keel of the country), and down into the Throndhjem district. Many people streamed towards him, and he fitted out ships. When the sons of Gunhild heard of this they got on board their ships, and sailed out of the Fjord; and Earl Hakon came to his seat at Hlader, and remained there all winter. The sons of Gunhild, on the other hand, occupied More; and they and the earl attacked each other in turns, killing each other's people. Earl Hakon kept his dominions of Throndhjem, and was there generally in the winter; but in summer he sometimes went to Helsingjaland, where he went on board of his ships and sailed with them down into the Baltic, and plundered there; and sometimes he remained in Throndhjem, and kept an army on foot, so that Gunhild's sons could get no hold northwards of Stad.

14. SIGURD SLEFA'S MURDER.

One summer Harald Grayskin with his troops went north to Bjarmaland, where he forayed, and fought a great battle with the inhabitants on the banks of the Vina (Dwina). King Harald gained the victory, killed many people, plundered and wasted and burned far and wide in the land, and made enormous booty. Glum Geirason tells of it thus:—

I saw the hero Harald chase
With bloody sword Bjarme's race:
They fly before him through the night,
All by their burning city's light.
On Dwina's bank, at Harald's word,
Arose the storm of spear and sword.
In such a wild war-cruise as this,
Great would he be who could bring peace.

King Sigurd Slefa came to the Herse Klyp's house. Klyp was a son of Thord, and a grandson of Hordakare, and was a man of power and great family. He was not at home; but his wife Alof give a good reception to the king, and made a great feast at which there was much drinking. Alof was a daughter of Asbjorn, and sister to Jarnskegge, north in Yrjar. Asbjorn's brother was called Hreidar, who was father to Styrkar, whose son was Eindride, father of Einar Tambaskielfer. In the night the king went to bed to Alof against her will, and then set out on his journey. The harvest thereafter, King Harald and his brother King Sigurd Slefa went to Vors, and summoned the bondes to a Thing. There the bondes fell on them, and would have killed them, but they escaped and took different roads. King Harald went to Hardanger, but King Sigurd to Alrekstader. Now when the Herse Klyp heard of this, he and

his relations assembled to attack the king; and Vemund Volubrjot was chief of their troop. Now when they came to the house they attacked the king, and Herse Klyp, it is said, ran him through with his sword and killed him; but instantly Klyp was killed on the spot by Erling Gamle (A.D. 965).

15. GRJOTGARD'S FALL.

King Harald Grafeld and his brother King Gudrod gathered together a great army in the east country, with which they set out northwards to Throndhjem (A.D. 968). When Earl Hakon heard of it he collected men, and set out to More, where he plundered. There his father's brother, Grjotgard, had the command and defence of the country on account of Gunhild's sons, and he assembled an army by order of the kings. Earl Hakon advanced to meet him, and gave him battle; and there fell Grjotgard and two other earls, and many a man besides. So says Einar Skalaglam:—

The helm-crown'd Hakon, brave as stout,
Again has put his foes to rout.
The bowl runs o'er with Odin's mead,
That fires the skald when mighty deed
Has to be sung. Earl Hakon's sword,
In single combat, as I've heard,
Three sons of earls from this one fray
To dwell with Odin drove away."

Thereafter Earl Hakon went out to sea, and sailed outside the coast, and came to Denmark. He went to the Danish King, Harald Gormson, and was well received by him, and staid with him all winter (A.D. 969). At that time there was also with the Danish king a man called Harald, a son of Knut Gormson, and a brother's son of King Harald. He was lately come home from a long viking cruise, on which he had gathered great riches, and therefore he was called Gold Harald. He thought he had a good chance of coming to the Danish kingdom.

16. KING ERLING'S FALL.

King Harald Grafeld and his brothers proceeded northwards to Throndhjem, where they met no opposition. They levied the scat-duties, and all other revenues, and laid heavy penalties upon the bondes; for the kings had for a long time received but little income from Throndhjem, because Earl Hakon was there with many troops, and was at variance with these kings. In autumn (A.D. 968) King Harald went south with the greater part of the men-at-arms, but King Erlin remained behind with his men. He raised great contributions from the bondes, and pressed severely on them; at which the bondes murmured greatly, and submitted to their losses with impatience. In winter they gathered together in a great force to go against King Erling, just as he was at a feast; and they gave battle to him, and he with the most of his men fell (A.D. 969).

17. THE SEASONS IN NORWAY AT THIS TIME.

While Gunhild's sons reigned in Norway the seasons were always bad, and the longer they reigned the worse were the crops; and the bondes laid the blame on them. They were very greedy, and used the bondes harshly. It came at length to be so bad that fish, as well as corn, were wanting. In Halogaland there was the greatest famine and distress; for scarcely any corn grew, and even snow was lying, and the cattle were bound in the byres all over the country until midsummer. Eyvind Skaldaspiller describes it in his poem, as he came outside of his house and found a thick snowdrift at that season:—

Tis midsummer, yet deep snows rest
On Odin's mother's frozen breast:
Like Laplanders, our cattle-kind
In stall or stable we must bind.

18. THE ICELANDERS AND EYVIND THE SKALD.

Eyvind composed a poem about the people of Iceland, for which they rewarded him by each bonde giving him three silver pennies, of full weight and white in the fracture. And when the silver was brought together at the Althing, the people resolved to have

it purified, and made into a row of clasps; and after the workmanship of the silver was paid, the row of clasps was valued at fifty marks. This they sent to Eyvind; but Eyvind was obliged to separate the clasps from each other, and sell them to buy food for his household. But the same spring a shoal of herrings set in upon the fishing ground beyond the coast-side, and Eyvind manned a ship's boat with his house servants and cottars, and rowed to where the herrings were come, and sang:—

Now let the steed of ocean bound
O'er the North Sea with dashing sound:
Let nimble tern and screaming gull
Fly round and round—our net is full.
Fain would I know if Fortune sends
A like provision to my friends.
Welcome provision 'tis, I wot,
That the whale drives to our cook's pot.

So entirely were his movable goods exhausted, that he was obliged to sell his arrows to buy herrings, or other meat for his table:—

Our arms and ornaments of gold
To buy us food we gladly sold:
The arrows of the bow gave we
For the bright arrows of the sea."

KING OLAF TRYGVASON'S SAGA.

1. OLAF TRYGVASON'S BIRTH.

King Trygve Olafson had married a wife who was called Astrid. She was a daughter of Eirik Bjodaskalle, a great man, who dwelt at Oprustader. But after Trygve's death (A.D. 963) Astrid fled, and privately took with her all the loose property she could. Her foster-father, Thorolf Lusarskeg, followed her, and never left her; and others of her faithful followers spied about to discover her enemies, and where they were. Astrid was pregnant with a child of King Trygve, and she went to a lake, and concealed herself in a holm or small island in it with a few men. Here her child was born, and it was a boy; and water was poured over it, and it was called Olaf after the grandfather. Astrid remained all summer here in concealment; but when the nights became dark, and the day began to shorten and the weather to be cold, she was obliged to take to the land, along with Thorolf and a few other men. They did not seek for houses unless in the night-time, when they came to them secretly; and they spoke to nobody. One evening, towards dark, they came to Oprustader, where Astrid's father Eirik dwelt, and privately sent a man to Eirik to tell him; and Eirik took them to an out-house, and spread a table for them with the best of food. When Astrid had been here a short time her travelling attendants left her, and none remained, behind with her but two servant girls, her child Olaf, Thorolf Lusarskeg, and his son Thorgils, who was six years old; and they remained all winter (A.D. 964).

2. OF GUNHILD'S SONS.

After Trygve Olafson's murder, Harald Grafeld and his brother Gudrod went to the farm which he owned; but Astrid was gone, and they could learn no tidings of her. A loose report came to their ears that she was pregnant to King Trygve; but they soon went away northwards, as before related. As soon as they met their mother Gunhild they told her all that had taken place. She inquired particularly about Astrid, and they told her the report they had heard; but as Gunhild's sons the same harvest and winter after had bickerings with Earl Hakon, as before related, they did not seek after Astrid and her son that winter.

3. ASTRID'S JOURNEY.

The spring after (A.D. 964) Gunhild sent spies to the Uplands, and all the way down to Viken, to spy what they could about Astrid; and her men came back, and could only tell her that Astrid must be with her father Eirik, and it was probable was bringing up her infant, the son of Trygve. Then Gunhild, without delay, sent off men well furnished with arms and horses, and in all a troop of thirty; and as their leader she sent a particular friend of her own, a powerful man called Hakon. Her orders were to go to Oprustader, to Eirik, and take King Trygve's son from thence, and bring

the child to her; and with these orders the men went out. Now when they were come to the neighbourhood of Oprustader, some of Eirik's friends observed the troop of travellers, and about the close of the day brought him word of their approach. Eirik immediately, in the night, made preparation for Astrid's flight, gave her good guides, and send her away eastward to Svithjod, to his good friend Hakon Gamle, who was a powerful man there. Long before day they departed, and towards evening they reached a domain called Skaun. Here they saw a large mansion, towards which they went, and begged a night's lodging. For the sake of concealment they were clad in mean clothing. There dwelt here a bonde called Bjorn Eiterkveisa, who was very rich, but very inhospitable. He drove them away; and therefore, towards dark, they went to another domain close by that was called Vidar. Thorstein was the name of the bonde; and he gave them lodging, and took good care of them, so that they slept well, and were well entertained. Early that morning Gunhild's men had come to Oprustader, and inquired for Astrid and her son. As Eirik told them she was not there, they searched the whole house, and remained till late in the day before they got any news of Astrid. Then they rode after her the way she had taken, and late at night they came to Bjorn Eiterkveisa in Skaun, and took up their quarters there. Hakon asked Bjorn if he knew anything about Astrid, and he said some people had been there in the evening wanting lodgings; "but I drove them away, and I suppose they have gone to some of the neighbouring houses." Thorstein's labourer was coming from the forest, having left his work at nightfall, and called in at Bjorn's house because it was in his way; and finding there were guests come to the house, and learning their business, he comes to Thorstein and tells him of it. As about a third part of the night was still remaining, Thorstein wakens his guests and orders them in an angry voice to go about their business; but as soon as they were out of the house upon the road, Thorstein tells them that Gunhild's messengers were at Bjorn's house, and are upon the trace of them. They entreat of him to help them, and he gave them a guide and some provisions. He conducted them through a forest to a lake, in which there was an islet overgrown with reeds. They waded out to the islet, and hid themselves among the reeds. Early in the morning Hakon rode away from Bjorn's into the township, and wherever he came he asked after Astrid; and when he came to Thorstein's he asked if she had been there. He said that some people had been there; but as soon as it was daylight they had set off again, eastwards, to the forest. Hakon made Thorstein go along with them, as he knew all the roads and hiding-places. Thorstein went with them; but when they were come into the woods, he led them right across the way Astrid had taken. They went about and about the whole day to no purpose, as they could find no trace of her, so they turned back to tell Gunhild the end of their travel. Astrid and her friends proceeded on their journey, and came to Svithjod, to Hakon Gamle (the Old), where she and her son remained a long time, and had friendly welcome.

4. HAKON'S EMBASSY TO SWEDEN.

When Gunhild, the mother of the kings, heard that Astrid and her son Olaf were in the kingdom of Svithjod, she again sent Hakon, with a good attendance, eastward, to Eirik king of Sweden, with presents and messages of friendship. The ambassadors were well received and well treated. Hakon, after a time, disclosed his errand to the king, saying that Gunhild had sent him with the request that the king would assist him in getting hold of Olaf Trygvason, to conduct him to Norway, where Gunhild would bring him up. The king gave Hakon people with him, and he rode with them to Hakon the Old, where Hakon desired, with many friendly expressions, that Olaf should go with him. Hakon the Old returned a friendly answer, saying that it depended entirely upon Olaf's mother. But Astrid would on no account listen to the proposal; and the messengers had to return as they came, and to tell King Eirik how the matter stood. The ambassadors then prepared to return home, and asked the king for some assistance to take the boy, whether Hakon the Old would or not. The king gave them again some attendants; and when they came to Hakon the Old, they again asked for the boy, and on his refusal to deliver him

they used high words and threatened violence. But one of the slaves, Buste by name, attacked Hakon, and was going to kill him; and they barely escaped from the thralls without a cudgelling, and proceeded home to Norway to tell Gunhild their ill success, and that they had only seen Olaf.

5. OF SIGURD EIRIKSON.

Astrid had a brother called Sigurd, a son of Eirik Bjodaskalle, who had long been abroad in Gardarike (Russia) with King Valdemar, and was there in great consideration. Astrid had now a great inclination to travel to her brother there. Hakon the Old gave her good attendants, and what was needful for the journey, and she set out with some merchants. She had then been two years (A.D. 965-966) with Hakon the Old, and Olaf was three years of age. As they sailed out into the Baltic, they were captured by vikings of Eistland, who made booty both of the people and goods, killing some, and dividing others as slaves. Olaf was separated from his mother, and an Eistland man called Klerkon got him as his share along with Thorolf and Thorgils. Klerkon thought that Thorolf was too old for a slave, and that there was not much work to be got out of him, so he killed him; but took the boys with him, and sold them to a man called Klerk for a stout and good ram. A third man, called Reas, bought Olaf for a good cloak. Reas had a wife called Rekon, and a son by her whose name was Rekone. Olaf was long with them, was treated well, and was much beloved by the people. Olaf was six years in Eistland in this banishment (A.D. 987-972).

6. OLAF IS SET FREE IN EISTLAND.

Sigurd, the son of Eirik (Astrid's brother), came into Eistland from Novgorod, on King Valdemar's business to collect the king's taxes and rents. Sigurd came as a man of consequence, with many followers and great magnificence. In the market-place he happened to observe a remarkably handsome boy; and as he could distinguish that he was a foreigner, he asked him his name and family. He answered him, that his name was Olaf; that he was a son of Trygve Olafson; and Astrid, a daughter of Eirik Bjodaskalle, was his mother. Then Sigurd knew that the boy was his sister's son, and asked him how he came there. Olaf told him minutely all his adventures, and Sigurd told him to follow him to the peasant Reas. When he came there he bought both the boys, Olaf and Thorgils, and took them with him to Holmgard. But, for the first, he made nothing known of Olaf's relationship to him, but treated him well.

7. KLERKON KILLED BY OLAF.

Olaf Trygvason was one day in the market-place, where there was a great number of people. He recognized Klerkon again, who had killed his foster-father Thorolf Lusarskeg. Olaf had a little axe in his hand, and with it he clove Klerkon's skull down to the brain, and ran home to his lodging, and told his friend Sigurd what he had done. Sigurd immediately took Olaf to Queen Allogia's house, told her what had happened, and begged her to protect the boy. She replied, that the boy appeared far too comely to allow him to be slain; and she ordered her people to be drawn out fully armed. In Holmgard the sacredness of peace is so respected, that it is law there to slay whoever puts a man to death except by judgment of law; and, according to this law and usage, the whole people stormed and sought after the boy. It was reported that he was in the Queen's house, and that there was a number of armed men there. When this was told to the king, he went there with his people, but would allow no bloodshed. It was settled at last in peace, that the king should name the fine for the murder; and the queen paid it. Olaf remained afterwards with the queen, and was much beloved. It is a law at Holmgard, that no man of royal descent shall stay there without the king's permission. Sigurd therefore told the queen of what family Olaf was, and for what reason he had come to Russia; namely, that he could not remain with safety in his own country: and begged her to speak to the king about it. She did so, and begged the king to help a king's son whose fate had been so hard; and in consequence of her entreaty the king promised to assist him, and accordingly he received Olaf into his court, and treated him nobly, and as a king's son. Olaf was nine years old

when he came to Russia, and he remained nine years more (A.D. 978-981) with King Valdemar. Olaf was the handsomest of men, very stout and strong, and in all bodily exercises he excelled every Northman that ever was heard of.

8. OF HAKON EARL OF HLADER.

Earl Hakon, Sigurd's son, was with the Danish king, Harald Gormson, the winter after he had fled from Norway before Gunhild's sons. During the winter (A.D. 969) the earl had so much care and sorrow that he took to bed, and passed many sleepless nights, and ate and drank no more than was needful to support his strength. Then he sent a private message to his friends north in Thronthjem, and proposed to them that they should kill King Erling, if they had an opportunity; adding, that he would come to them in summer. The same winter the Thronthjem people accordingly, as before related, killed King Erling. There was great friendship between Earl Hakon and Gold Harald, and Harald told Hakon all his intentions. He told him that he was tired of a ship-life, and wanted to settle on the land; and asked Hakon if he thought his brother King Harald would agree to divide the kingdom with him if he asked it. "I think," replied Hakon, "that the Danish king would not deny thy right; but the best way to know is to speak to the king himself. I know for certain so much, that you will not get a kingdom if you don't ask for it." Soon after this conversation Gold Harald spoke to the king about the matter, in the presence of many great men who were friends to both; and Gold Harald asked King Harald to divide the kingdom with him in two equal parts, to which his royal birth and the custom of the Danish monarchy gave him right. The king was highly incensed at this demand, and said that no man had asked his father Gorm to be king over half of Denmark, nor yet his grandfather King Hordaknut, or Sigurd Orm, or Ragnar Lodbrok; and he was so exasperated and angry, that nobody ventured to speak of it to him.

9. OF GOLD HARALD.

Gold Harald was now worse off than before; for he had got no kingdom, and had got the king's anger by proposing it. He went as usual to his friend Hakon, and complained to him of his fate, and asked for good advice, and if he could help him to get his share of the kingdom; saying that he would rather try force, and the chance of war, than give it up.

Hakon advised him not to speak to any man so that this should be known; "for," said he, "it concerns thy life: and rather consider with thyself what thou art man enough to undertake; for to accomplish such a purpose requires a bold and firm man, who will neither stick at good nor evil to do that which is intended; for to take up great resolutions, and then to lay them aside, would only end in dishonour."

Gold Harald replies—"I will so carry on what I begin, that I will not hesitate to kill Harald with my own hands, if I can come thereby to the kingdom he denies me, and which is mine by right." And so they separated.

Now King Harald comes also to Earl Hakon, and tells him the demand on his kingdom which Gold Harald had made, and also his answer, and that he would upon no account consent to diminish his kingdom. "And if Gold Harald persists in his demand, I will have no hesitation in having him killed; for I will not trust him if he does not renounce it."

The earl answered,—"My thoughts are, that Harald has carried his demand so far that he cannot now let it drop, and I expect nothing but war in the land; and that he will be able to gather a great force, because his father was so beloved. And then it would be a great enormity if you were to kill your relation; for, as things now stand, all men would say that he was innocent. But I am far from saying, or advising, that you should make yourself a smaller king than your father Gorm was, who in many ways enlarged, but never diminished his kingdom."

The king replies,—"What then is your advice,—if I am neither to divide my kingdom, nor to get rid of my fright and danger?"

"Let us meet again in a few days," said Earl Hakon, "and I will then have considered the matter well, and will give you my advice upon it."

The king then went away with his people.

10. COUNCILS HELD BY HAKON AND HARALD.

Earl Hakon had now great reflection, and many opinions to weigh, and he let only very few be in the house with him. In a few days King Harald came again to the earl to speak with him, and ask if he had yet considered fully the matter they had been talking of.

"I have," said the earl, "considered it night and day ever since, and find it most advisable that you retain and rule over the whole of your kingdom just as your father left it; but that you obtain for your relation Harald another kingdom, that he also may enjoy honour and dignity."

"What kind of kingdom is that," said the king, "which I can give to Harald, that I may possess Denmark entire?"

"It is Norway," said the earl. "The kings who are there are oppressive to the people of the country, so that every man is against them who has tax or service to pay."

The king replies,—"Norway is a large country, and the people fierce, and not good to attack with a foreign army. We found that sufficiently when Hakon defended that country; for we lost many people, and gained no victory. Besides, Harald the son of Eirik is my foster-son, and has sat on my knee."

The earl answers, "I have long known that you have helped Gunhild's sons with your force, and a bad return you have got for it; but we shall get at Norway much more easily than by fighting for it with all the Danish force. Send a message to your foster-son Harald, Eirik's son, and offer him the lands and fiefs which Gunhild's sons held before in Denmark. Appoint him a meeting, and Gold Harald will soon conquer for himself a kingdom in Norway from Harald Grafeld."

The king replies, that it would be called a bad business to deceive his own foster-son.

"The Danes," answered the earl, "will rather say that it was better to kill a Norwegian viking than a Danish, and your own brother's son."

They spoke so long over the matter, that they agreed on it.

11. HARALD GORMSON'S MESSAGE TO NORWAY.

Thereafter Gold Harald had a conference with Earl Hakon; and the earl told him he had now advanced his business so far, that there was hope a kingdom might stand open for him in Norway. "We can then continue," said he, "our ancient friendship, and I can be of the greatest use to you in Norway. Take first that kingdom. King Harald is now very old, and has but one son, and cares but little about him, as he is but the son of a concubine."

The Earl talked so long to Gold Harald that the project pleased him well; and the king, the earl, and Gold Harald often talked over the business together. The Danish king then sent messengers north to Norway to Harald Grafeld, and fitted them out magnificently for their journey. They were well received by Harald. The messengers told him that Earl Hakon was in Denmark, but was lying dangerously sick, and almost out of his senses. They then delivered from Harald, the Danish king, the invitation to Harald Grafeld, his foster-son, to come to him and receive investiture of the fiefs he and his brothers before him had formerly held in Denmark; and appointing a meeting in Jutland. Harald Grafeld laid the matter before his mother and other friends. Their opinions were divided. Some thought that the expedition was not without its danger, on account of the men with whom they had to deal; but the most were in haste to begin the journey, for at that time there was such a famine in Norway that the kings could scarcely feed their men-at-arms; and on this account the Fjord, on which the kings resided, usually got the name of Hardanger (Hardacre). In Denmark, on the other hand, there had been tolerably good crops; so that people thought that if King Harald got fiefs, and something to rule over there they would get some assistance. It was therefore concluded, before the messengers returned, that Harald should travel to Denmark to the Danish king in summer, and accept the conditions King Harald offered.

12. TREACHERY OF HARALD AND HAKON.

Harald Grafeld went to Denmark in the summer (A.D. 969) with three long-ships; and Herse Arinbjorn, from the Fjord district, commanded one of them. King Harald sailed from Viken over to Limfjord in Jutland, and landed at the narrow neck of land where the Danish king was expected. Now when Gold Harald heard of this, he sailed there with nine ships which he had fitted out before for a viking cruise. Earl Hakon had also his war force on foot; namely, twelve large ships, all ready, with which he proposed to make an expedition. When Gold Harald had departed Earl Hakon says to the king, "Now I don't know if we are not sailing on an expedition, and yet are to pay the penalty of not having joined it. Gold Harald may kill Harald Grafeld, and get the kingdom of Norway; but you must not think he will be true to you, although you do help him to so much power, for he told me in winter that he would take your life if he could find opportunity to do so. Now I will win Norway for you, and kill Gold Harald, if you will promise me a good condition under you. I will be your earl; swear an oath of fidelity to you, and, with your help, conquer all Norway for you; hold the country under your rule; pay you the scat and taxes; and you will be a greater king than your father, as you will have two kingdoms under you." The king and the earl agreed upon this, and Hakon set off to seek Gold Harald.

13. DEATH OF HARALD GRAFELD.

Gold Harald came to the neck of land at Limfjord, and immediately challenged Harald Grafeld to battle; and although Harald had fewer men, he went immediately on the land, prepared for battle, and drew up his troops. Before the lines came together Harald Grafeld urged on his men, and told them to draw their swords. He himself advanced the foremost of the troop, hewing down on each side. So says Glum Geirason, in Grafeld's lay:—

Brave were thy words in battlefield,
Thou stainer of the snow-white shield!—
Thou gallant war-god! With thy voice
Thou couldst the dying man rejoice:
The cheer of Harald could impart
Courage and life to every heart.
While swinging high the blood-smeared sword,
By arm and voice we knew our lord.

There fell Harald Grafeld. So says Glum Geirason:—

On Limfjord's strand, by the tide's flow,
Stern Fate has laid King Harald low;
The gallant viking-cruiser—he
Who loved the isle-encircling sea.
The generous ruler of the land
Fell at the narrow Limfjord strand.
Enticed by Hakon's cunning speech
To his death-bed on Limfjord's beach.

The most of King Harald's men fell with him. There also fell Herse Arinbjorn.

This happened fifteen years after the death of Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, and thirteen years after that of Sigurd earl of Hlader. The priest Are Frode says that Earl Hakon was thirteen years earl over his father's dominions in Thronhjelm district before the fall of Harald Grafeld; but, for the last six years of Harald Grafeld's life, Are Frode says the Earl Hakon and Gunhild's sons fought against each other, and drove each other out of the land by turns.

14. GOLD HARALD'S DEATH.

Soon after Harald Grafeld's fall, Earl Hakon came up to Gold Harald, and the earl immediately gave battle to Harald. Hakon gained the victory, and Harald was made prisoner; but Hakon had him immediately hanged on a gallows. Hakon then went to the Danish king, and no doubt easily settled with him for the killing his relative Gold Harald.

15. DIVISION OF THE COUNTRY.

Soon after King Harald Gormson ordered a levy of men over all his kingdom, and sailed with 600 ships. There were with him Earl Hakon, Harald Grenske, a son of King Gudrod, and many

other great men who had fled from their udal estates in Norway on account of Gunhild's sons. The Danish king sailed with his fleet from the south to Viken, where all the people of the country surrendered to him. When he came to Tunsberg swarms of people joined him; and King Harald gave to Earl Hakon the command of all the men who came to him in Norway, and gave him the government over Rogaland, Hordaland, Sogn, Fjord-district, South More, Raumsdal, and North More. These seven districts gave King Harald to Earl Hakon to rule over, with the same rights as Harald Harfager gave with them to his sons; only with the difference, that Hakon should there, as well as in Thronhjelm, have the king's land-estates and land-tax, and use the king's money and goods according to his necessities whenever there was war in the country. King Harald also gave Harald Grenske Vingulmark, Vestfold, and Agder all the way to Lidandisnes (the Naze), together with the title of king; and let him have these dominions with the same rights as his family in former times had held them, and as Harald Harfager had given with them to his sons. Harald Grenske was then eighteen years old, and he became afterwards a celebrated man. Harald king of Denmark returned home thereafter with all his army.

16. GUNHILD'S SONS LEAVE THE COUNTRY.

Earl Hakon proceeded northwards along the coast with his force; and when Gunhild and her sons got the tidings they proceeded to gather troops, but were ill off for men. Then they took the same resolution as before, to sail out to sea with such men as would follow them away to the westward (A.D. 969). They came first to the Orkney Islands, and remained there a while. There were in Orkney then the Earls Hlodver, Arnfid, Ljot, and Skule, the sons of Thorfin Hausakljufer.

Earl Hakon now brought all the country under him, and remained all winter (A.D. 970) in Thronhjelm. Einar Skalaglam speaks of his conquests in "Vellekla":—

Norway's great watchman, Harald, now
May bind the silk snood on his brow—
Seven provinces he seized. The realm
Prosper with Hakon at the helm.

As Hakon the earl proceeded this summer along the coast subjecting all the people to him, he ordered that over all his dominions the temples and sacrifices should be restored, and continued as of old. So it is said in the "Vellekla":—

Hakon the earl, so good and wise,
Let all the ancient temples rise;—
Thor's temples raised with fostering hand
That had been ruined through the land.
His valiant champions, who were slain
On battle-fields across the main,
To Thor, the thunder-god, may tell
How for the gods all turns out well.
The hardy warrior now once more
Offers the sacrifice of gore;
The shield-bearer in Loke's game
Invokes once more great Odin's name.
The green earth gladly yields her store,
As she was wont in days of yore,
Since the brave breaker of the spears
The holy shrines again uprears.
The earl has conquered with strong hand
All that lies north of Viken land:
In battle storm, and iron rain
Hakon spreads wide his sword's domain.

The first winter that Hakon ruled over Norway the herrings set in everywhere through the fjords to the land, and the seasons ripened to a good crop all that had been sown. The people, therefore, laid in seed for the next year, and got their lands sowed, and had hope of good times.

17. HAKON'S BATTLE WITH RAGNFRED.

King Ragnfred and King Gudrod, both sons of Gunhild and Eirik, were now the only sons of Gunhild remaining in life. So says Glum Geirason in Grafeld's lay:—

When in the battle's bloody strife
The sword took noble Harald's life,
Half of my fortunes with him fell:
But his two brothers, I know well,

My loss would soon repair, should they
Again in Norway bear the sway,
And to their promises should stand,
If they return to rule the land.

Ragnfred began his course in the spring after he had been a year in the Orkney Islands. He sailed from thence to Norway, and had with him fine troops, and large ships. When he came to Norway he learnt that Earl Hakon was in Thronthjem; therefore he steered northwards around Stad, and plundered in South More. Some people submitted to him; for it often happens, when parties of armed men scour over a country, that those who are nearest the danger seek help where they think it may be expected. As soon as Earl Hakon heard the news of disturbance in More, he fitted out ships, sent the war-token through the land, made ready in all haste, and proceeded out of the fjord. He had no difficulty in assembling men. Ragnfred and Earl Hakon met at the north corner of More; and Hakon, who had most men, but fewer ships, began the battle. The combat was severe, but heaviest on Hakon's side; and as the custom then was, they fought bow to bow, and there was a current in the sound which drove all the ships in upon the land. The earl ordered to row with the oars to the land where landing seemed easiest. When the ships were all grounded, the earl with all his men left them, and drew them up so far that the enemy might not launch them down again, and then drew up his men on a grass-field, and challenged Ragnfred to land. Ragnfred and his men laid their vessels in along the land, and they shot at each other a long time; but upon the land Ragnfred would not venture: and so they separated. Ragnfred sailed with his fleet southwards around Stad; for he was much afraid the whole forces of the country would swarm around Hakon. Hakon, on his part, was not inclined to try again a battle, for he thought the difference between their ships in size was too great; so in harvest he went north to Thronthjem, and staid there all winter (A.D. 971). King Ragnfred consequently had all the country south of Stad at his mercy; namely, Fjord district, Hordaland, Sogn, Rogaland; and he had many people about him all winter. When spring approached he ordered out the people and collected a large force. By going about the districts he got many men, ships, and warlike stores sent as he required.

18. BATTLE BETWEEN HAKON AND RAGNFRED.

Towards spring Earl Hakon ordered out all the men north in the country; and got many people from Halogaland and Naumudal; so that from Bryda to Stad he had men from all the sea-coast. People flocked to him from all the Thronthjem district and from Raumsdal. It was said for certain that he had men from four great districts, and that seven earls followed him, and a matchless number of men. So it is said in the "Vellekla":—

Hakon, defender of the land,
Armed in the North his warrior-band
To Sogn's old shore his force he led,
And from all quarters thither sped
War-ships and men; and haste was made
By the young god of the sword-blade,
The hero-viking of the wave,
His wide domain from foes to save.
With shining keels seven kings sailed on
To meet this raven-feeding one.
When the clash came, the stunning sound
Was heard in Norway's farthest bound;
And sea-borne corpses, floating far,
Brought round the Naze news from the war.

Earl Hakon sailed then with his fleet southwards around Stad; and when he heard that King Ragnfred with his army had gone towards Sogn, he turned there also with his men to meet him: and there Ragnfred and Hakon met. Hakon came to the land with his ships, marked out a battle-field with hazel branches for King Ragnfred, and took ground for his own men in it. So it is told in the "Vellekla":—

In the fierce battle Ragnfred then
Met the grim foe of Vindland men;
And many a hero of great name
Fell in the sharp sword's bloody game.
The wielder of fell Narve's weapon,
The conquering hero, valiant Hakon

Had laid his war-ships on the strand,
And ranged his warriors on the land.

There was a great battle; but Earl Hakon, having by far the most people, gained the victory. It took place on the Thinganes, where Sogn and Hordaland meet.

King Ragnfred fled to his ships, after 300 of his men had fallen. So it is said in the "Vellekla":—

Sharp was the battle-strife, I ween,—
Deadly and close it must have been,
Before, upon the bloody plain,
Three hundred corpses of the slain
Were stretched for the black raven's prey;
And when the conquerors took their way
To the sea-shore, they had to tread
O'er piled-up heaps of foemen dead.

After this battle King Ragnfred fled from Norway; but Earl Hakon restored peace to the country, and allowed the great army which had followed him in summer to return home to the north country, and he himself remained in the south that harvest and winter (A.D. 972).

19. EARL HAKON'S MARRIAGE.

Earl Hakon married a girl called Thora, a daughter of the powerful Skage Skoptason, and very beautiful she was. They had two sons, Svein and Heming, and a daughter called Bergljot who was afterwards married to Einar Tambaskielfer. Earl Hakon was much addicted to women, and had many children; among others a daughter Ragnhild, whom he married to Skopte Skagason, a brother of Thora. The Earl loved Thora so much that he held Thora's family in higher respect than any other people, and Skopte his brother-in-law in particular; and he gave him many great fiefs in More. Whenever they were on a cruise together, Skopte must lay his ship nearest to the earl's, and no other ship was allowed to come in between.

20. DEATH OF SKOPTE.

One summer that Earl Hakon was on a cruise, there was a ship with him of which Thorleif Spake (the Wise) was steersman. In it was also Eirik, Earl Hakon's son, then about ten or eleven years old. Now in the evenings, as they came into harbour, Eirik would not allow any ship but his to lie nearest to the earl's. But when they came to the south, to More, they met Skopte the earl's brother-in-law, with a well-manned ship; and as they rowed towards the fleet, Skopte called out that Thorleif should move out of the harbour to make room for him, and should go to the roadstead. Eirik in haste took up the matter, and ordered Skopte to go himself to the roadstead. When Earl Hakon heard that his son thought himself too great to give place to Skopte, he called to them immediately that they should haul out from their berth, threatening them with chastisement if they did not. When Thorleif heard this, he ordered his men to slip their land-cable, and they did so; and Skopte laid his vessel next to the earl's as he used to do. When they came together, Skopte brought the earl all the news he had gathered, and the earl communicated to Skopte all the news he had heard; and Skopte was therefore called Tidindaskopte (the Newsman Skopte). The winter after (A.D. 973) Eirik was with his foster-father Thorleif, and early in spring he gathered a crew of followers, and Thorleif gave him a boat of fifteen benches of rowers, with ship furniture, tents, and ship provisions; and Eirik set out from the fjord, and southwards to More. Tidindaskopte happened also to be going with a fully manned boat of fifteen rowers' benches from one of his farms to another, and Eirik went against him to have a battle. Skopte was slain, but Eirik granted life to those of his men who were still on their legs. So says Eyjolf Dadaskald in the "Banda Lay":—

At eve the youth went out
To meet the warrior stout—
To meet stout Skopte—he
Whose war-ship roves the sea
Like force was on each side,
But in the whirling tide
The young wolf Eirik slew
Skopte, and all his crew
And he was a gallant one,
Dear to the Earl Hakon.

Up, youth of steel-hard breast—
No time hast thou to rest!
Thy ocean wings spread wide—
Speed o'er the foaming tide!
Speed on—speed on thy way!
For here thou canst not stay.

Eirik sailed along the land and came to Denmark, and went to King Harald Gormson, and staid with him all winter (A.D. 974). In spring the Danish king sent him north to Norway, and gave him an earldom, and the government of Vingulmark and Raumarike, on the same terms as the small scat-paying kings had formerly held these domains. So says Eyjolf Dadaskald:—

South through ocean's spray
His dragon flew away
To Gormson's hall renowned.
Where the bowl goes bravely round.
And the Danish king did place
This youth of noble race
Where, shield and sword in hand,
He would aye defend his land.

Eirik became afterwards a great chief.

21. OLAF TRYGVASON'S JOURNEY FROM RUSSIA.

All this time Olaf Trygvason was in Gardarike (Russia), and highly esteemed by King Valdemar, and beloved by the queen. King Valdemar made him chief over the men-at-arms whom he sent out to defend the land. So says Hallarsteid:—

The hater of the niggard band,
The chief who loves the Northman's land,
Was only twelve years old when he
His Russian war-ships put to sea.
The wain that ploughs the sea was then
Loaded with war-gear by his men—
With swords, and spears, and helms: and deep
Out to the sea his good ships sweep.

Olaf had several battles, and was lucky as a leader of troops. He himself kept a great many men-at-arms at his own expense out of the pay the king gave him. Olaf was very generous to his men, and therefore very popular. But then it came to pass, what so often happens when a foreigner is raised to higher power and dignity than men of the country, that many envied him because he was so favoured by the king, and also not less so by the queen. They hinted to the king that he should take care not to make Olaf too powerful,—“for such a man may be dangerous to you, if he were to allow himself to be used for the purpose of doing you or your kingdom harm; for he is extremely expert in all exercises and feats, and very popular. We do not, indeed, know what it is he can have to talk of so often with the queen.” It was then the custom among great monarchs that the queen should have half of the court attendants, and she supported them at her own expense out of the scat and revenue provided for her for that purpose. It was so also at the court of King Valdemar that the queen had an attendance as large as the king, and they vied with each other about the finest men, each wanting to have such in their own service. It so fell out that the king listened to such speeches, and became somewhat silent and blunt towards Olaf. When Olaf observed this, he told it to the queen; and also that he had a great desire to travel to the Northern land, where his family formerly had power and kingdoms, and where it was most likely he would advance himself. The queen wished him a prosperous journey, and said he would be found a brave man wherever he might be. Olaf then made ready, went on board, and set out to sea in the Baltic.

As he was coming from the east he made the island of Borgundarholm (Bornholm), where he landed and plundered. The country people hastened down to the strand, and gave him battle; but Olaf gained the victory, and a large booty.

22. OLAF TRYGVASON'S MARRIAGE.

While Olaf lay at Borgundarholm there came on bad weather, storm, and a heavy sea, so that his ships could not lie there; and he sailed southwards under Vindland, where they found a good harbour. They conducted themselves very peacefully, and remained some time. In Vindland there was then a king called Burizleif,

who had three daughters,—Geira, Gunhild, and Astrid. The king's daughter Geira had the power and government in that part where Olaf and his people landed, and Dixen was the name of the man who most usually advised Queen Geira. Now when they heard that unknown people were came to the country, who were of distinguished appearance, and conducted themselves peaceably, Dixen repaired to them with a message from Queen Geira, inviting the strangers to take up their winter abode with her; for the summer was almost spent, and the weather was severe and stormy. Now when Dixen came to the place he soon saw that the leader was a distinguished man, both from family and personal appearance, and he told Olaf the queen's invitation with the most kindly message. Olaf willingly accepted the invitation, and went in harvest (A.D. 982) to Queen Geira. They liked each other exceedingly, and Olaf courted Queen Geira; and it was so settled that Olaf married her the same winter, and was ruler, along with Queen Geira, over her dominions. Halfred Vandredaskald tells of these matters in the lay he composed about King Olaf:—

Why should the deeds the hero did
In Bornholm and the East he hid?
His deadly weapon Olaf bold
Dyed red: why should not this be told?

23. EARL HAKON PAYS NO SCAT.

Earl Hakon ruled over Norway, and paid no scat; because the Danish king gave him all the scat revenue that belonged to the king in Norway, for the expense and trouble he had in defending the country against Gunhild's sons.

24. HARALD OPPOSES CHRISTIANITY.

The Emperor Otta (Otto) was at that time in the Saxon country, and sent a message to King Harald, the Danish king, that he must take on the true faith and be baptized, he and all his people whom he ruled; “otherwise,” says the emperor, “we will march against him with an army.” The Danish king ordered the land defence to be fitted out, Danavirke (the Danish wall) to be well fortified, and his ships of war rigged out. He sent a message also to Earl Hakon in Norway to come to him early in spring, and with as many men as he could possibly raise. In spring (A.D. 975) Earl Hakon levied an army over the whole country which was very numerous, and with it he sailed to meet the Danish king. The king received him in the most honourable manner. Many other chiefs also joined the Danish king with their men, so that he had gathered a very large army.

25. OLAF TRYGVASON'S WAR EXPEDITION.

Olaf Trygvason had been all winter (A.D. 980) in Vindland, as before related, and went the same winter to the baronies in Vindland which had formerly been under Queen Geira, but had withdrawn themselves from obedience and payment of taxes. There Olaf made war, killed many people, burnt out others, took much property, and laid all of them under subjection to him, and then went back to his castle. Early in spring Olaf rigged out his ships and set off to sea. He sailed to Skane and made a landing. The people of the country assembled, and gave him battle; but King Olaf conquered, and made a great booty. He then sailed eastward to the island of Gotland, where he captured a merchant vessel belonging to the people of Jamtaland. They made a brave defence; but the end of it was that Olaf cleared the deck, killed many of the men, and took all the goods. He had a third battle in Gotland, in which he also gained the victory, and made a great booty. So says Halfred Vandredaskald:—

The king, so fierce in battle-fray,
First made the Vindland men give way:
The Gotlanders must tremble next;
And Scania's shores are sorely vexed
By the sharp pelting arrow shower
The hero and his warriors pour;
And then the Jamtaland men must fly,
Scared by his well-known battle-cry.

26. OTTA AND HAKON IN BATTLE.

The Emperor Otta assembled a great army from Saxland, Frakland, Frisland, and Vindland. King Burizleif followed him with a large army, and in it was his son-in-law, Olaf Trygvason. The emperor had a great body of horsemen, and still greater of foot people, and a great army from Holstein. Harald, the Danish king, sent Earl Hakon with the army of Northmen that followed him southwards to Danavirke, to defend his kingdom on that side. So it is told in the "Vellekla":—

Over the foaming salt sea spray
The Norse sea-horses took their way,
Racing across the ocean-plain
Southwards to Denmark's green domain.
The gallant chief of Hordaland
Sat at the helm with steady hand,
In casque and shield, his men to bring
From Dovre to his friend the king.
He steered his war-ships o'er the wave
To help the Danish king to save
Mordalf, who, with a gallant band
Was hastening from the Jutes' wild land,
Across the forest frontier rude,
With toil and pain through the thick wood.
Glad was the Danish king, I trow,
When he saw Hakon's galley's prow.
The monarch straightway gave command
To Hakon, with a steel-clad band,
To man the Dane-work's rampart stout,
And keep the foreign foemen out.

The Emperor Otta came with his army from the south to Danavirke, but Earl Hakon defended the rampart with his men. The Dane-work (Danavirke) was constructed in this way:—Two fjords run into the land, one on each side; and in the farthest bight of these fjords the Danes had made a great wall of stone, turf, and timber, and dug a deep and broad ditch in front of it, and had also built a castle over each gate of it. There was a hard battle there, of which the "Vellekla" speaks:—

Thick the storm of arrows flew,
Loud was the din, black was the view
Of close array of shield and spear
Of Vind, and Frank, and Saxon there.
But little recked our gallant men;
And loud the cry might be heard then
Of Norway's brave sea-roving son—
'On 'gainst the foe! On! Lead us on!

Earl Hakon drew up his people in ranks upon all the gate-towers of the wall, but the greater part of them he kept marching along the wall to make a defence wheresoever an attack was threatened. Many of the emperor's people fell without making any impression on the fortification, so the emperor turned back without farther attempt at an assault on it. So it is said in the "Vellekla":—

They who the eagle's feast provide
In ranked line fought side by side,
'Gainst lines of war-men under shields
Close packed together on the fields,
Earl Hakon drive by daring deeds
The Saxons to their ocean-steeds;
And the young hero saves from fall
The Danavirke—the people's wall.

After this battle Earl Hakon went back to his ships, and intended to sail home to Norway; but he did not get a favourable wind, and lay for some time outside at Limafjord.

27. HARALD AND HAKON ARE BAPTIZED.

The Emperor Otta turned back with his troops to Slesvik, collected his ships of war, and crossed the fjord of Sle into Jutland. As soon as the Danish king heard of this he marched his army against him, and there was a battle, in which the emperor at last got the victory. The Danish king fled to Limafjord and took refuge in the island Marsey. By the help of mediators who went between the king and the emperor, a truce and a meeting between them were agreed on. The Emperor Otta and the Danish king met upon Marsey. There Bishop Poppo instructed King Harald in the holy faith; he bore red hot irons in his hands, and exhibited his unscorched hands to the king. Thereafter King Harald allowed himself to be baptized,

and also the whole Danish army. King Harald, while he was in Marsey, had sent a message to Hakon that he should come to his succour; and the earl had just reached the island when the king had received baptism. The king sends word to the earl to come to him, and when they met the king forced the earl to allow himself also to be baptized. So Earl Hakon and all the men who were with him were baptized; and the king gave them priests and other learned men with them, and ordered that the earl should make all the people in Norway be baptized. On that they separated; and the earl went out to sea, there to wait for a wind.

28. HAKON RENOUNCES CHRISTIANITY.

When a wind came with which he thought he could get clear out to sea, he put all the learned men on shore again, and set off to the ocean; but as the wind came round to the south-west, and at last to west, he sailed eastward, out through Eyrarsund, ravaging the land on both sides. He then sailed eastward along Skane, plundering the country wherever he came. When he got east to the skerries of East Gautland, he ran in and landed, and made a great blood-sacrifice. There came two ravens flying which croaked loudly; and now, thought the earl, the blood-offering has been accepted by Odin, and he thought good luck would be with him any day he liked to go to battle. Then he set fire to his ships, landed his men, and went over all the country with armed hand. Earl Ottar, who ruled over Gautland, came against him, and they held a great battle with each other; but Earl Hakon gained the day, and Earl Ottar and a great part of his men were killed. Earl Hakon now drove with fire and sword over both the Gautlands, until he came into Norway; and then he proceeded by land all the way north to Throindhjem. The "Vellekla" tells about this:—

On the silent battle-field,
In viking garb, with axe and shield,
The warrior, striding o'er the slain,
Asks of the gods 'What days will gain?'
Two ravens, flying from the east,
Come croaking to the bloody feast:
The warrior knows what they foreshow—
The days when Gautland blood will flow.
A viking-feast Earl Hakon kept,
The land with viking fury swept,
Harrying the land far from the shore
Where foray ne'er was known before.
Leaving the barren cold coast side,
He raged through Gautland far and wide,—
Led many a gold-decked viking shield
O'er many a peaceful inland field.
Bodies on bodies Odin found
Heaped high upon each battle ground:
The moor, as if by witchcraft's power,
Grows green, enriched by bloody shower.
No wonder that the gods delight
To give such luck in every fight
To Hakon's men—for he restores
Their temples on our Norway shores.

29. THE EMPEROR OTTA RETURNS HOME.

The Emperor Otta went back to his kingdom in the Saxon land, and parted in friendship with the Danish king. It is said that the Emperor Otta stood godfather to Svein, King Harald's son, and gave him his name; so that he was baptized Otta Svein. King Harald held fast by his Christianity to his dying day.

King Burizleif went to Vindland, and his son-in-law King Olaf went with him. This battle is related also by Halfred Vandredaskald in his song on Olaf:—

He who through the foaming surges
His white-winged ocean-courers urges,
Hewed from the Danes, in armour dressed,
The iron bark off mail-clad breast.

30. OLAF'S JOURNEY FROM VINDLAND.

Olaf Trygvason was three years in Vindland (A.D. 982-984) when Geira his queen fell sick, and she died of her illness. Olaf felt his loss so great that he had no pleasure in Vindland after it. He provided himself, therefore, with warships, and went out again a plundering, and plundered first in Frisland, next in Saxland, and then all the way to Flaemingialand (Flanders). So says Halfred Vandredaskald:—

Olaf's broad axe of shining steel
 For the shy wolf left many a meal.
 The ill-shaped Saxon corpses lay
 Heaped up, the witch-wife's horses' prey.
 She rides by night: at pools of blood.
 Where Frisland men in daylight stood,
 Her horses slake their thirst, and fly
 On to the field where Flemings lie.
 The raven-friend in Odin's dress—
 Olaf, who foes can well repress,
 Left Flemish flesh for many a meal
 With his broad axe of shining steel.

31. KING OLAF'S FORAYS.

Thereafter Olaf Trygvason sailed to England, and ravaged wide around in the land. He sailed all the way north to Northumberland, where he plundered; and thence to Scotland, where he marauded far and wide. Then he went to the Hebrides, where he fought some battles; and then southwards to Man, where he also fought. He ravaged far around in Ireland, and thence steered to Bretland, which he laid waste with fire and sword, and all the district called Cumberland. He sailed westward from thence to Valand, and marauded there. When he left the west, intending to sail to England, he came to the islands called the Scilly Isles, lying westward from England in the ocean. Thus tells Halfred Vandraskald of these events:—

The brave young king, who ne'er retreats,
 The Englishman in England beats.
 Death through Northumberland is spread
 From battleaxe and broad spearhead.
 Through Scotland with his spears he rides;
 To Man his glancing ships he guides:
 Feeding the wolves where'er he came,
 The young king drove a bloody game.
 The gallant bowmen in the isles
 Slew foemen, who lay heaped in piles.
 The Irish fled at Olaf's name—
 Fled from a young king seeking fame.
 In Bretland, and in Cumberland,
 People against him could not stand:
 Thick on the fields their corpses lay,
 To ravens and howling wolves a prey.

Olaf Trygvason had been four years on this cruise (A.D. 985-988), from the time he left Vindland till he came to the Scilly Islands.

32. KING OLAF IS BAPTIZED.

While Olaf Trygvason lay in the Scilly Isles he heard of a seer, or fortune-teller, on the islands, who could tell beforehand things not yet done, and what he foretold many believed was really fulfilled. Olaf became curious to try this man's gift of prophecy. He therefore sent one of his men, who was the handsomest and strongest, clothed him magnificently, and bade him say he was the king; for Olaf was known in all countries as handsomer, stronger, and braver than all others, although, after he had left Russia, he retained no more of his name than that he was called Ole, and was Russian. Now when the messenger came to the fortune-teller, and gave himself out for the king, he got the answer, "Thou art not the king, but I advise thee to be faithful to thy king." And more he would not say to that man. The man returned, and told Olaf, and his desire to meet the fortune-teller was increased; and now he had no doubt of his being really a fortune-teller. Olaf repaired himself to him, and, entering into conversation, asked him if he could foresee how it would go with him with regard to his kingdom, or of any other fortune he was to have. The hermit replies in a holy spirit of prophecy, "Thou wilt become a renowned king, and do celebrated deeds. Many men wilt thou bring to faith and baptism, and both to thy own and others' good; and that thou mayst have no doubt of the truth of this answer, listen to these tokens: When thou comest to thy ships many of thy people will conspire against thee, and then a battle will follow in which many of thy men will fall, and thou wilt be wounded almost to death, and carried upon a shield to thy ship; yet after seven days thou shalt be well of thy wounds, and immediately thou shalt let thyself be baptized." Soon after Olaf went down to his ships, where he met some mutineers and people who would destroy him and his men. A fight took place, and the result was what the hermit had predicted, that Olaf was wounded, and carried upon a shield to his ship, and that

his wound was healed in seven days. Then Olaf perceived that the man had spoken truth, that he was a true fortune-teller, and had the gift of prophecy. Olaf went once more to the hermit, and asked particularly how he came to have such wisdom in foreseeing things to be. The hermit replied, that the Christian God himself let him know all that he desired; and he brought before Olaf many great proofs of the power of the Almighty. In consequence of this encouragement Olaf agreed to let himself be baptized, and he and all his followers were baptized forthwith. He remained here a long time, took the true faith, and got with him priests and other learned men.

33. OLAF MARRIES GYDA.

In autumn (A.D. 988) Olaf sailed from Scilly to England, where he put into a harbour, but proceeded in a friendly way; for England was Christian, and he himself had become Christian. At this time a summons to a Thing went through the country, that all men should come to hold a Thing. Now when the Thing was assembled a queen called Gyda came to it, a sister of Olaf Kvaran, who was king of Dublin in Ireland. She had been married to a great earl in England, and after his death she was at the head of his dominions. In her territory there was a man called Alfvine, who was a great champion and single-combat man. He had paid his addresses to her; but she gave for answer, that she herself would choose whom of the men in her dominions she would take in marriage; and on that account the Thing was assembled, that she might choose a husband. Alfvine came there dressed out in his best clothes, and there were many well-dressed men at the meeting. Olaf had come there also; but had on his bad-weather clothes, and a coarse overgarment, and stood with his people apart from the rest of the crowd. Gyda went round and looked at each, to see if any appeared to her a suitable man. Now when she came to where Olaf stood she looked at him straight in the face, and asked "what sort of man he was?"

He said, "I am called Ole; and I am a stranger here."

Gyda replies, "Wilt thou have me if I choose thee?"

"I will not say no to that," answered he; and he asked what her name was, and her family, and descent.

"I am called Gyda," said she; "and am daughter of the king of Ireland, and was married in this country to an earl who ruled over this territory. Since his death I have ruled over it, and many have courted me, but none to whom I would choose to be married."

She was a young and handsome woman. They afterwards talked over the matter together, and agreed, and Olaf and Gyda were betrothed.

34. KING OLAF AND ALFVINE'S DUEL.

Alfvine was very ill pleased with this. It was the custom then in England, if two strove for anything, to settle the matter by single combat; and now Alfvine challenges Olaf Trygvason to fight about this business. The time and place for the combat were settled, and that each should have twelve men with him. When they met, Olaf told his men to do exactly as they saw him do. He had a large axe; and when Alfvine was going to cut at him with his sword he hewed away the sword out of his hand, and with the next blow struck down Alfvine himself. He then bound him fast. It went in the same way with all Alfvine's men. They were beaten down, bound, and carried to Olaf's lodging. Thereupon he ordered Alfvine to quit the country, and never appear in it again; and Olaf took all his property. Olaf in this way got Gyda in marriage, and lived sometimes in England, and sometimes in Ireland.

35. KING OLAF GETS HIS DOG VIGE.

While Olaf was in Ireland he was once on an expedition which went by sea. As they required to make a foray for provisions on the coast, some of his men landed, and drove down a large herd of cattle to the strand. Now a peasant came up, and entreated Olaf to give him back the cows that belonged to him. Olaf told him to take his cows, if he could distinguish them; "but don't delay our march." The peasant had with him a large house-dog, which he put in among the herd of cattle, in which many hundred head of beasts were driven together. The dog ran into the herd, and drove

out exactly the number which the peasant had said he wanted; and all were marked with the same mark, which showed that the dog knew the right beasts, and was very sagacious. Olaf then asked the peasant if he would sell him the dog. "I would rather give him to you," said the peasant. Olaf immediately presented him with a gold ring in return, and promised him his friendship in future. This dog was called Vige, and was the very best of dogs, and Olaf owned him long afterwards.

36. HARALD GORMSON SAILS AGAINST ICELAND.

The Danish king, Harald Gormson, heard that Earl Hakon had thrown off Christianity, and had plundered far and wide in the Danish land. The Danish king levied an army, with which he went to Norway; and when he came to the country which Earl Hakon had to rule over he laid waste the whole land, and came with his fleet to some islands called Solunder. Only five houses were left standing in Laeradai; but all the people fled up to the mountains, and into the forest, taking with them all the moveable goods they could carry with them. Then the Danish king proposed to sail with his fleet to Iceland, to avenge the mockery and scorn all the Icelanders had shown towards him; for they had made a law in Iceland, that they should make as many lampoons against the Danish king as there were headlands in his country; and the reason was, because a vessel which belonged to certain Icelanders was stranded in Denmark, and the Danes took all the property, and called it wreck. One of the king's bailiffs called Birger was to blame for this; but the lampoons were made against both. In the lampoons were the following lines:—

The gallant Harald in the field
Between his legs lets drop his shield;
Into a pony he was changed.
And kicked his shield, and safely ranged.
And Birger, he who dwells in halls
For safety built with four stone walls,
That these might be a worthy pair,
Was changed into a pony mare.

37. HARALD SENDS A WARLOCK TO ICELAND.

King Harald told a warlock to hie to Iceland in some altered shape, and to try what he could learn there to tell him: and he set out in the shape of a whale. And when he came near to the land he went to the west side of Iceland, north around the land, where he saw all the mountains and hills full of guardian-spirits, some great, some small. When he came to Vapnafjord he went in towards the land, intending to go on shore; but a huge dragon rushed down the dale against him with a train of serpents, paddocks, and toads, that blew poison towards him. Then he turned to go westward around the land as far as Eyjafjord, and he went into the fjord. Then a bird flew against him, which was so great that its wings stretched over the mountains on either side of the fjord, and many birds, great and small, with it. Then he swam farther west, and then south into Breidafjord. When he came into the fjord a large grey bull ran against him, wading into the sea, and bellowing fearfully, and he was followed by a crowd of land-spirits. From thence he went round by Reykjanes, and wanted to land at Vikarsskeid, but there came down a hill-giant against him with an iron staff in his hands. He was a head higher than the mountains, and many other giants followed him. He then swam eastward along the land, and there was nothing to see, he said, but sand and vast deserts, and, without the skerries, high-breaking surf; and the ocean between the countries was so wide that a long-ship could not cross it. At that time Brodhelge dwelt in Vapnafjord, Eyjolf Valgerdson in Eyjafjord, Thorð Geller in Breidafjord, and Thorod Gode in Olfus. Then the Danish king turned about with his fleet, and sailed back to Denmark.

Hakon the earl settled habitations again in the country that had been laid waste, and paid no scat as long as he lived to Denmark.

38. HARALD GORMSON'S DEATH.

Svein, King Harald's son, who afterwards was called Tjuguskeg (forked beard), asked his father King Harald for a part of his king-

dom; but now, as before, Harald would not listen to dividing the Danish dominions, and giving him a kingdom. Svein collected ships of war, and gave out that he was going on a viking cruise; but when all his men were assembled, and the Jomsborg viking Palnatoke had come to his assistance he ran into Sealand to Isafjord, where his father had been for some time with his ships ready to proceed on an expedition. Svein instantly gave battle, and the combat was severe. So many people flew to assist King Harald, that Svein was overpowered by numbers, and fled. But King Harald received a wound which ended in his death: and Svein was chosen King of Denmark. At this time Sigvalde was earl over Jomsborg in Vindland. He was a son of King Strutharald, who had ruled over Skane. Heming, and Thorkel the Tall, were Sigvalde's brothers. Bue the Thick from Bornholm, and Sigurd his brother, were also chiefs among the Jomsborg vikings: and also Vagn, a son of Ake and Thorgunna, and a sister's son of Bue and Sigurd. Earl Sigvalde had taken King Svein prisoner, and carried him to Vindland, to Jomsborg, where he had forced him to make peace with Burizleif, the king of the Vinds, and to take him as the peace-maker between them. Earl Sigvalde was married to Astrid, a daughter of King Burizleif; and told King Svein that if he did not accept of his terms, he would deliver him into the hands of the Vinds. The king knew that they would torture him to death, and therefore agreed to accept the earl's mediation. The earl delivered this judgment between them—that King Svein should marry Gunhild, King Burizleif's daughter; and King Burizleif again Thyre, a daughter of Harald, and King Svein's sister; but that each party should retain their own dominions, and there should be peace between the countries. Then King Svein returned home to Denmark with his wife Gunhild. Their sons were Harald and Knut (Canute) the Great. At that time the Danes threatened much to bring an army into Norway against Earl Hakon.

39. VOW OF THE JOMSBORG VIKINGS.

King Svein made a magnificent feast, to which he invited all the chiefs in his dominions; for he would give the succession-feast, or the heirship-ale, after his father Harald. A short time before, Strutharald in Skane, and Vesete in Bornholm, father to Bue the Thick and to Sigurd, had died; and King Svein sent word to the Jomsborg vikings that Earl Sigvalde and Bue, and their brothers, should come to him, and drink the funeral-ale for their fathers in the same feast the king was giving. The Jomsborg vikings came to the festival with their bravest men, forty ships of them from Vindland, and twenty ships from Skane. Great was the multitude of people assembled. The first day of the feast, before King Svein went up into his father's high-seat, he drank the bowl to his father's memory, and made the solemn vow, that before three winters were past he would go over with his army to England, and either kill King Adalrad (Ethelred), or chase him out of the country. This heirship bowl all who were at the feast drank. Thereafter for the chiefs of the Jomsborg vikings was filled and drunk the largest horn to be found, and of the strongest drink. When that bowl was emptied, all men drank Christ's health; and again the fullest measure and the strongest drink were handed to the Jomsborg vikings. The third bowl was to the memory of Saint Michael, which was drunk by all. Thereafter Earl Sigvalde emptied a remembrance bowl to his father's honour, and made the solemn vow, that before three winters came to an end he would go to Norway, and either kill Earl Hakon, or chase him out of the country. Thereupon Thorkel the Tall, his brother, made a solemn vow to follow his brother Sigvalde to Norway, and not flinch from the battle so long as Sigvalde would fight there. Then Bue the Thick vowed to follow them to Norway, and not flinch so long as the other Jomsborg vikings fought. At last Vagn Akason vowed that he would go with them to Norway, and not return until he had slain Thorkel Leira, and gone to bed to his daughter Ingebjorg without her friends' consent. Many other chiefs made solemn vows about different things. Thus was the heirship-ale drunk that day, but the next morning, when the Jomsborg vikings had slept off their drink, they thought they had spoken more than enough. They held a meeting to consult how they should proceed with their undertaking, and they determined to fit out as speedily as

possible for the expedition; and without delay ships and men-at-arms were prepared, and the news spread quickly.

40. EIRIK AND HAKON MAKE A WAR LEVY.

When Earl Eirik, the son of Hakon, who at that time was in Raumarike, heard the tidings, he immediately gathered troops, and went to the Uplands, and thence over the mountains to Throndhjem, and joined his father Earl Hakon. Thord Kolbeinson speaks of this in the lay of Eirik:—

News from the south are flying round;
The bonde comes with look profound,
Bad news of bloody battles bringing,
Of steel-clad men, of weapons ringing.
I hear that in the Danish land
Long-sided ships slide down the strand,
And, floating with the rising tide,
The ocean-courers soon will ride.

The earls Hakon and Eirik had war-arrows split up and sent round the Throndhjem country; and despatched messages to both the Mores, North More and South More, and to Raumsdal, and also north to Naumudal and Halogaland. They summoned all the country to provide both men and ships. So it is said in Eirik's lay:

The skald must now a war-song raise,
The gallant active youth must praise,
Who o'er the ocean's field spreads forth
Ships, cutters, boats, from the far north.
His mighty fleet comes sailing by,—
The people run to see them glide,
Mast after mast, by the coast-side.

Earl Hakon set out immediately to the south, to More, to reconnoitre and gather people; and Earl Eirik gathered an army from the north to follow.

41. EXPEDITION OF THE JOMSBORG VIKINGS.

The Jomsborg vikings assembled their fleet in Limafjord, from whence they went to sea with sixty sail of vessels. When they came under the coast of Agder, they steered northwards to Rogaland with their fleet, and began to plunder when they came into the earl's territory; and so they sailed north along the coast, plundering and burning. A man, by name Geirmund, sailed in a light boat with a few men northwards to More, and there he fell in with Earl Hakon, stood before his dinner table, and told the earl the tidings of an army from Denmark having come to the south end of the land. The earl asked if he had any certainty of it. Then Geirmund stretched forth one arm, from which the hand was cut off, and said, "Here is the token that the enemy is in the land." Then the earl questioned him particularly about this army. Geirmund says it consists of Jomsborg vikings, who have killed many people, and plundered all around. "And hastily and hotly they pushed on," says he "and I expect it will not be long before they are upon you." On this the earl rode into every fjord, going in along the one side of the land and out at the other, collecting men; and thus he drove along night and day. He sent spies out upon the upper ridges, and also southwards into the Fjords; and he proceeded north to meet Eirik with his men. This appears from Eirik's lay:—

The earl, well skilled in war to speed
O'er the wild wave the viking-steed,
Now launched the high stems from the shore,
Which death to Sigvalde's vikings bore.
Rollers beneath the ships' keels crash,
Oar-blades loud in the grey sea splash,
And they who give the ravens food
Row fearless through the curling flood.

Eirik hastened southwards with his forces the shortest way he could.

42. OF THE JOMSBORG VIKINGS.

Earl Sigvalde steered with his fleet northwards around Stad, and came to the land at the Herøy Isles. Although the vikings fell in with the country people, the people never told the truth about what the earl was doing; and the vikings went on pillaging and laying waste. They laid to their vessels at the outer end of Hod

Island, landed, plundered, and drove both men and cattle down to the ships, killing all the men able to bear arms.

As they were going back to their ships, came a bonde, walking near to Bue's troop, who said to them, "Ye are not doing like true warriors, to be driving cows and calves down to the strand, while ye should be giving chase to the bear, since ye are coming near to the bear's den."

"What says the old man?" asked some. "Can he tell us anything about Earl Hakon?"

The peasant replies, "The earl went yesterday into the Hjørundarfjord with one or two ships, certainly not more than three, and then he had no news about you."

Bue ran now with his people in all haste down to the ships, leaving all the booty behind. Bue said, "Let us avail ourselves now of this news we have got of the earl, and be the first to the victory." When they came to their ships they rode off from the land. Earl Sigvalde called to them, and asked what they were about. They replied, "The earl is in the fjord," on which Earl Sigvalde with the whole fleet set off, and rowed north about the island Hod.

43. BATTLE WITH THE JOMSBORG VIKINGS.

The earls Hakon and Eirik lay in Halkelsvik, where all their forces were assembled. They had 150 ships, and they had heard that the Jomsborg vikings had come in from sea, and lay at the island Hod; and they, in consequence, rowed out to seek them. When they reached a place called Hjørungavag they met each other, and both sides drew up their ships in line for an attack. Earl Sigvalde's banner was displayed in the midst of his army, and right against it Earl Hakon arranged his force for attack. Earl Sigvalde himself had 20 ships, but Earl Hakon had 60. In Earl's army were these chiefs,—Thoror Hjort from Halogaland, and Styrrkar from Gimsar. In the wing of the opposite array of the Jomsborg vikings was Bue the Thick, and his brother Sigurd, with 20 ships. Against him Earl Eirik laid himself with 60 ships; and with him were these chiefs,—Gudbrand Hvite from the Uplands, and Thorkel Leira from Viken. In the other wing of the Jomsborg vikings' array was Vagn Akason with 20 ships; and against him stood Svein the son of Hakon, in whose division was Skegge of Yrjar at Uphaug, and Rognvald of Aervik at Stad, with 60 ships. It is told in the Eirik's lay thus:—

The bonde's ships along the coast
Sailed on to meet the foemen's host;
The stout earl's ships, with eagle flight,
Rushed on the Danes in bloody fight.
The Danish ships, of court-men full,
Were cleared of men,—and many a hull
Was driving empty on the main,
With the warm corpses of the slain.

Eyvind Skaldaspiller says also in the "Haleygia-tal":—

Twas at the peep of day,—
Our brave earl led the way;
His ocean horses bounding—
His war-horns loudly sounding!
No joyful morn arose
For Yngve Frey's base foes
These Christian island-men
Wished themselves home again.

Then the fleets came together, and one of the sharpest of conflicts began. Many fell on both sides, but the most by far on Hakon's side; for the Jomsborg vikings fought desperately, sharply, and murderously, and shot right through the shields. So many spears were thrown against Earl Hakon that his armour was altogether split asunder, and he threw it off. So says Tind Halkelson:—

The ring-linked coat of strongest mail
Could not withstand the iron hail,
Though sewed with care and elbow bent,
By Norn, on its strength intent.
The fire of battle raged around,—
Odin's steel shirt flew all unbound!
The earl his ring-mail from him flung,
Its steel rings on the wet deck rung;
Part of it fell into the sea,—
A part was kept, a proof to be
How sharp and thick the arrow-flight
Among the sea-steeds in this fight.

44. EARL SIGVALDE'S FLIGHT.

The Jomsborg vikings had larger and higher-sided ships; and both parties fought desperately. Vagn Akason laid his ship on board of Svein Earl Hakon's son's ship, and Svein allowed his ship to give way, and was on the point of flying. Then Earl Eirik came up, and laid his ship alongside of Vagn, and then Vagn gave way, and the ships came to lie in the same position as before. Thereupon Eirik goes to the other wing, which had gone back a little, and Bue had cut the ropes, intending to pursue them. Then Eirik laid himself, board to board, alongside of Bue's ship, and there was a severe combat hand to hand. Two or three of Eirik's ships then laid themselves upon Bue's single vessel. A thunder-storm came on at this moment, and such a heavy hail-storm that every hailstone weighed a pennyweight. The Earl Sigvalde cut his cable, turned his ship round, and took flight. Vagn Akason called to him not to fly; but as Earl Sigvalde paid no attention to what he said, Vagn threw his spear at him, and hit the man at the helm. Earl Sigvalde rowed away with 35 ships, leaving 25 of his fleet behind.

45. BUE THROWS HIMSELF OVERBOARD.

Then Earl Hakon laid his ship on the other side of Bue's ship, and now came heavy blows on Bue's men. Vigfus, a son of Vigaglun, took up an anvil with a sharp end, which lay upon the deck, and on which a man had welded the hilt to his sword just before, and being a very strong man cast the anvil with both hands at the head of Aslak Holmskalle, and the end of it went into his brains. Before this no weapon could wound this Aslak, who was Bue's foster-brother, and forecastle commander, although he could wound right and left. Another man among the strongest and bravest was Havard Hoggande. In this attack Eirik's men boarded Bue's ship, and went aft to the quarter-deck where Bue stood. There Thorstein Midlang cut at Bue across his nose, so that the nosepiece of his helmet was cut in two, and he got a great wound; but Bue, in turn, cut at Thorstein's side, so that the sword cut the man through. Then Bue lifted up two chests full of gold, and called aloud, "Overboard all Bue's men," and threw himself overboard with his two chests. Many of his people sprang overboard with him. Some fell in the ship, for it was of no use to call for quarter. Bue's ship was cleared of people from stem to stern, and afterwards all the others, the one after the other.

46. VIKINGS BOUND TOGETHER IN ONE CHAIN.

Earl Eirik then laid himself alongside of Vagn's ship, and there was a brave defence; but at last this ship too was cleared, and Vagn and thirty men were taken prisoners, and bound, and brought to land. Then came up Thorkel Leira, and said, "Thou madest a solemn vow, Vagn, to kill me, but now it seems more likely that I will kill thee." Vagn and his men sat all upon a log of wood together. Thorkel had an axe in his hands, with which he cut at him who sat outmost on the log. Vagn and the other prisoners were bound so that a rope was fastened on their feet, but they had their hands free. One of them said, "I will stick this cloak-pin that I have in my hand into the earth, if it be so that I know anything, after my head is cut off." His head was cut off, but the cloak-pin fell from his hand. There sat also a very handsome man with long hair, who twisted his hair over his head, put out his neck, and said, "Don't make my hair bloody." A man took the hair in his hands and held it fast. Thorkel hewed with his axe; but the viking twitched his head so strongly that he who was holding his hair fell forwards, and the axe cut off both his hands, and stuck fast in the earth. Then Earl Eirik came up, and asked, "Who is that handsome man?"

He replies, "I am called Sigurd, and am Bue's son. But are all the Jomsborg vikings dead?"

Eirik says, "Thou art certainly Boe's son. Wilt thou now take life and peace?"

"That depends," says he, "upon who it is that offers it."

"He offers who has the power to do it—Earl Eirik."

"That will I," says he, "from his hands." And now the rope was loosened from him.

Then said Thorkel Leira, "Although thou should give all these men life and peace, earl, Vagn Akason shall never come from this

with life." And he ran at him with uplifted axe; but the viking Skarde swung himself in the rope, and let himself fall just before Thorkel's feet, so that Thorkel fell over him, and Vagn caught the axe and gave Thorkel a death-wound. Then said the earl, "Vagn, wilt thou accept life?"

"That I will," says he, "if you give it to all of us."

"Loose them from the rope," said the earl, and it was done. Eighteen were killed, and twelve got their lives.

47. DEATH OF GISSUR OF VALDERS.

Earl Hakon, and many with him, were sitting upon a piece of wood, and a bow-string twanged from Bue's ship, and the arrow struck Gissur from Valdels, who was sitting next the earl, and was clothed splendidly. Thereupon the people went on board, and found Havard Hoggande standing on his knees at the ship's railing, for his feet had been cut off, and he had a bow in his hand. When they came on board the ship Havard asked, "Who fell by that shaft?"

They answered, "A man called Gissur."

"Then my luck was less than I thought," said he.

"Great enough was the misfortune," replied they; "but thou shalt not make it greater." And they killed him on the spot.

The dead were then ransacked, and the booty brought all together to be divided; and there were twenty-five ships of the Jomsborg vikings in the booty. So says Tind:

Many a viking's body lay
Dead on the deck this bloody day,
Before they cut their sun-dried ropes,
And in quick flight put all their hopes.
He whom the ravens know afar
Cleared five-and-twenty ships of war:
A proof that in the furious fight
None can withstand the Norsemen's might.

Then the army dispersed. Earl Hakon went to Thronthjem, and was much displeased that Earl Eirik had given quarter to Vagn Akason. It was said that at this battle Earl Hakon had sacrificed for victory his son, young Erling, to the gods; and instantly came the hailstorm, and the defeat and slaughter of the Jomsborg vikings.

Earl Eirik went to the Uplands, and eastward by that route to his own kingdom, taking Vagn Akason with him. Earl Eirik married Vagn to Ingebjorg, a daughter of Thorkel Leira, and gave him a good ship of war and all belonging to it, and a crew; and they parted the best of friends. Then Vagn went home south to Denmark, and became afterwards a man of great consideration, and many great people are descended from him.

48. KING HARALD GRENSKE'S DEATH.

Harald Grenske, as before related, was king in Vestfold, and was married to Asta, a daughter of Gudbrand Kula. One summer (A.D. 994) Harald Grenske made an expedition to the Baltic to gather property, and he came to Svithjod. Olaf the Swede was king there, a son of Eirik the Victorious, and Sigrid, a daughter of Skoglar-toste. Sigrid was then a widow, and had many and great estates in Svithjod. When she heard that her foster-brother was come to the country a short distance from her, she sent men to him to invite him to a feast. He did not neglect the invitation, but came to her with a great attendance of his followers, and was received in the most friendly way. He and the queen sat in the high-seat, and drank together towards the evening, and all his men were entertained in the most hospitable manner. At night, when the king went to rest, a bed was put up for him with a hanging of fine linen around it, and with costly bedclothes; but in the lodging-house there were few men. When the king was undressed, and had gone to bed, the queen came to him, filled a bowl herself for him to drink, and was very gay, and pressed to drink. The king was drunk above measure, and, indeed, so were they both. Then he slept, and the queen went away, and laid herself down also. Sigrid was a woman of the greatest understanding, and clever in many things. In the morning there was also the most excellent entertainment; but then it went on as usual when people have drunk too much, that next day they take care not to exceed. The queen was very gay, and she and the king talked of many things with each other; among other things she valued her property, and the

dominions she had in Svithjod, as nothing less than his property in Norway. With that observation the king was nowise pleased, and he found no pleasure in anything after that, but made himself ready for his journey in an ill humor. On the other hand, the queen was remarkably gay, and made him many presents, and followed him out to the road. Now Harald returned about harvest to Norway, and was at home all winter; but was very silent and cast down. In summer he went once more to the Baltic with his ships, and steered to Svithjod. He sent a message to Queen Sigrid that he wished to have a meeting with her and she rode down to meet him. They talked together and he soon brought out the proposal that she should marry him. She replied, that this was foolish talk for him, who was so well married already that he might think himself well off. Harald says, "Asta is a good and clever woman; but she is not so well born as I am." Sigrid replies, "It may be that thou art of higher birth, but I think she is now pregnant with both your fortunes." They exchanged but few words more before the queen rode away. King Harald was now depressed in mind, and prepared himself again to ride up the country to meet Queen Sigrid. Many of his people dissuaded him; but nevertheless he set off with a great attendance, and came to the house in which the queen dwelt. The same evening came another king, called Vissavald, from Gardarike (Russia), likewise to pay his addresses to Queen Sigrid. Lodging was given to both the kings, and to all their people, in a great old room of an out-building, and all the furniture was of the same character; but there was no want of drink in the evening, and that so strong that all were drunk, and the watch, both inside and outside, fell fast asleep. Then Queen Sigrid ordered an attack on them in the night, both with fire and sword. The house was burnt, with all who were in it and those who slipped out were put to the sword. Sigrid said that she would make these small kings tired of coming to court her. She was afterwards called Sigrid the Haughty (Storrada).

49. BIRTH OF OLAF, SON OF HARALD GRENSKE.

This happened the winter after the battle of the Jomsborg vikings at Hjorungavag. When Harald went up the country after Sigrid, he left Hrane behind with the ships to look after the men. Now when Hrane heard that Harald was cut off, he returned to Norway the shortest way he could, and told the news. He repaired first to Asta, and related to her all that had happened on the journey, and also on what errand Harald had visited Queen Sigrid. When Asta got these tidings she set off directly to her father in the Uplands, who received her well; but both were enraged at the design which had been laid in Svithjod, and that King Harald had intended to set her in a single condition. In summer (A.D. 995) Asta, Gudbrand's daughter, was confined, and had a boy child, who had water poured over him, and was called Olaf. Hrane himself poured water over him, and the child was brought up at first in the house of Gudbrand and his mother Asta.

50. ABOUT EARL HAKON.

Earl Hakon ruled over the whole outer part of Norway that lies on the sea, and had thus sixteen districts under his sway. The arrangement introduced by Harald Harfager, that there should be an earl in each district, was afterward continued for a long time; and thus Earl Hakon had sixteen earls under him. So says the "Vellekla":—

Who before has ever known
Sixteen earls subdued by one?
Who has seen all Norway's land
Conquered by one brave hero's hand?
It will be long in memory held,
How Hakon ruled by sword and shield.
When tales at the viking's mast go round,
His praise will every mouth resound.

While Earl Hakon ruled over Norway there were good crops in the land, and peace was well preserved in the country among the bondes. The Earl, for the greater part of his lifetime, was therefore much beloved by the bondes; but it happened, in the longer course of time, that the earl became very intemperate in his intercourse with women, and even carried it so far that he made the daugh-

ters of people of consideration be carried away and brought home to him; and after keeping them a week or two as concubines, he sent them home. He drew upon himself the indignation of the relations of these girls; and the bondes began to murmur loudly, as the Throndhjem people have the custom of doing when anything goes against their judgment.

51. THORER KLAKKA'S JOURNEY.

Earl Hakon, in the mean time, hears some whisper that to the westward, over the North sea, was a man called Ole, who was looked upon as a king. From the conversation of some people, he fell upon the suspicion that he must be of the royal race of Norway. It was, indeed, said that this Ole was from Russia; but the earl had heard that Trygve Olafson had had a son called Olaf, who in his infancy had gone east to Gardarike, and had been brought up by King Valdemar. The earl had carefully inquired about this man, and had his suspicion that he must be the same person who had now come to these western countries. The earl had a very good friend called Thorer Klakka, who had been long upon viking expeditions, sometimes also upon merchant voyages; so that he was well acquainted all around. This Thorer Earl Hakon sends over the North sea, and told him to make a merchant voyage to Dublin, many were in the habit of doing, and carefully to discover who this Ole was. Provided he got any certainty that he was Olaf Trygvason, or any other of the Norwegian royal race, then Thorer should endeavor to ensnare him by some deceit, and bring him into the earl's power.

52. OLAF TRYGVASON COMES TO NORWAY.

On this Thorer sails westward to Ireland, and hears that Ole is in Dublin with his wife's father King Olaf Kvaran. Thorer, who was a plausible man, immediately got acquainted with Ole; and as they often met, and had long conversations together, Ole began to inquire about news from Norway, and above all of the Upland kings and great people,—which of them were in life, and what dominations they now had. He asked also about Earl Hakon, and if he was much liked in the country. Thorer replies, that the earl is such a powerful man that no one dares to speak otherwise than he would like; but that comes from there being nobody else in the country to look to. "Yet, to say the truth, I know it to be the mind of many brave men, and of whole communities, that they would much rather see a king of Harald Harfager's race come to the kingdom. But we know of no one suited for this, especially now that it is proved how vain every attack on Earl Hakon must be." As they often talked together in the same strain, Olaf disclosed to Thorer his name and family, and asked him his opinion, and whether he thought the bondes would take him for their king if he were to appear in Norway. Thorer encouraged him very eagerly to the enterprise, and praised him and his talents highly. Then Olaf's inclination to go to the heritage of his ancestors became strong. Olaf sailed accordingly, accompanied by Thorer, with five ships; first to the Hebrides, and from thence to the Orkneys. At that time Earl Sigurd, Hlodver's son, lay in Osmundswall, in the island South Ronaldsa, with a ship of war, on his way to Caithness. Just at the same time Olaf was sailing with his fleet from the westward to the islands, and ran into the same harbour, because Pentland Firth was not to be passed at that tide. When the king was informed that the earl was there, he made him be called; and when the earl came on board to speak with the king, after a few words only had passed between them, the king says the earl must allow himself to be baptized, and all the people of the country also, or he should be put to death directly; and he assured the earl he would lay waste the islands with fire and sword, if the people did not adopt Christianity. In the position the earl found himself, he preferred becoming Christian, and he and all who were with him were baptized. Afterwards the earl took an oath to the king, went into his service, and gave him his son, whose name was Hvelp (Whelp), or Hunde (Dog), as an hostage; and the king took Hvelp to Norway with him. Thereafter Olaf went out to sea to the eastward, and made the land at Morster Island, where he first touched the ground of Norway. He had high mass sung in a tent, and afterwards on the

spot a church was built. Thorer Klakka said now to the king, that the best plan for him would be not to make it known who he was, or to let any report about him get abroad; but to seek out Earl Hakon as fast as possible and fall upon him by surprise. King Olaf did so, sailing northward day and night, when wind permitted, and did not let the people of the country know who it was that was sailing in such haste. When he came north to Agdanes, he heard that the earl was in the fjord, and was in discord with the bondes. On hearing this, Thorer saw that things were going in a very different way from what he expected; for after the battle with the Jomsborg vikings all men in Norway were the most sincere friends of the earl on account of the victory he had gained, and of the peace and security he had given to the country; and now it unfortunately turns out that a great chief has come to the country at a time when the bondes are in arms against the earl.

53. EARL HAKON'S FLIGHT.

Earl Hakon was at a feast in Medalhus in Gaulardal and his ships lay out by Viggja. There was a powerful bonde, by name Orm Lyrgja, who dwelt in Bunes, who had a wife called Gudrun, a daughter of Berghthor of Lundar. She was called the Lundasol; for she was the most-beautiful of women. The earl sent his slaves to Orm, with the errand that they should bring Orm's wife, Gudrun, to the earl. The thralls tell their errand, and Orm bids them first seat themselves to supper; but before they had done eating, many people from the neighbourhood, to whom Orm had sent notice, had gathered together: and now Orm declared he would not send Gudrun with the messengers. Gudrun told the thralls to tell the earl that she would not come to him, unless he sent Thora of Rimul after her. Thora was a woman of great influence, and one of the earl's best beloved. The thralls say that they will come another time, and both the bonde and his wife would be made to repent of it; and they departed with many threats. Orm, on the other hand, sent out a message-token to all the neighbouring country, and with it the message to attack Earl Hakon with weapons and kill him. He sent also a message to Haldor in Skerdingsstedja, who also sent out his message-token. A short time before, the earl had taken away the wife of a man called Brynjolf, and there had very nearly been an insurrection about that business. Having now again got this message-token, the people made a general revolt, and set out all to Medalhus. When the earl heard of this, he left the house with his followers, and concealed himself in a deep glen, now called Jarlsdal (Earl's Dale). Later in the day, the earl got news of the bondes' army. They had beset all the roads; but believed the earl had escaped to his ships, which his son Erlend, a remarkably handsome and hopeful young man, had the command of. When night came the earl dispersed his people, and ordered them to go through the forest roads into Orkadale; "for nobody will molest you," said he, "when I am not with you. Send a message to Erlend to sail out of the fjord, and meet me in More. In the mean time I will conceal myself from the bondes." Then the earl went his way with one thrall or slave, called Kark, attending him. There was ice upon the Gaul (the river of Gaulardal), and the earl drove his horse upon it, and left his coat lying upon the ice. They then went to a hole, since called Jarlshella (the Earl's Hole), where they slept. When Kark awoke he told his dream,—that a black threatening mad had come into the hole, and was angry that people should have entered it; and that the man had said, "Ulle is dead." The earl said that his son Erlend must be killed. Kark slept again and was again disturbed in his sleep; and when he awoke he told his dream,—that the same man had again appeared to him, and bade him tell the earl that all the sounds were closed. From this dream the earl began to suspect that it betokened a short life to him. They stood up, and went to the house of Rimul. The earl now sends Kark to Thora, and begs of her to come secretly to him. She did so and received the earl kindly and he begged her to conceal him for a few nights until the army of the bondes had dispersed. "Here about my house," said she, "you will be hunted after, both inside and outside; for many know that I would willingly help you if I can. There is but one place about the house where they could never expect to find such a man as you, and that is the swine-stye." When they came there the earl said, "Well, let it be made

ready for us; as to save our life is the first and foremost concern." The slave dug a great hole in it, bore away the earth that he dug out, and laid wood over it. Thora brought the tidings to the earl that Olaf Trygvason had come from sea into the fjord, and had killed his son Erlend. Then the earl and Kark both went into the hole. Thora covered it with wood, and threw earth and dung over it, and drove the swine upon the top of it. The swine-stye was under a great stone.

54. ERLEND'S DEATH.

Olaf Trygvason came from sea into the fjord with five long-ships, and Erlend, Hakon's son, rowed towards him with three ships. When the vessels came near to each other, Erlend suspected they might be enemies, and turned towards the land. When Olaf and his followers saw long-ships coming in haste out of the fjord, and rowing towards them, they thought Earl Hakon must be here; and they put out all oars to follow them. As soon as Erlend and his ships got near the land they rowed aground instantly, jumped overboard, and took to the land; but at the same instant Olaf's ship came up with them. Olaf saw a remarkably handsome man swimming in the water, and laid hold of a tiller and threw it at him. The tiller struck Erlend, the son of Hakon the earl, on the head, and clove it to the brain; and there left Erlend his life. Olaf and his people killed many; but some escaped, and some were made prisoners, and got life and freedom that they might go and tell what had happened. They learned then that the bondes had driven away Earl Hakon, and that he had fled, and his troops were all dispersed.

55. EARL HAKON'S DEATH.

The bondes then met Olaf, to the joy of both, and they made an agreement together. The bondes took Olaf to be their king, and resolved, one and all, to seek out Earl Hakon. They went up Gaulardal; for it seemed to them likely that if the earl was concealed in any house it must be at Rimul, for Thora was his dearest friend in that valley. They come up, therefore, and search everywhere, outside and inside the house, but could not find him. Then Olaf held a House Thing (trusting), or council out in the yard, and stood upon a great stone which lay beside the swine-stye, and made a speech to the people, in which he promised to enrich the man with rewards and honours who should kill the earl. This speech was heard by the earl and the thrall Kark. They had a light in their room.

"Why art thou so pale," says the earl, "and now again black as earth? Thou hast not the intention to betray me?"

"By no means," replies Kark.

"We were born on the same night," says the earl, "and the time will be short between our deaths."

King Olaf went away in the evening. When night came the earl kept himself awake but Kark slept, and was disturbed in his sleep. The earl woke him, and asked him "what he was dreaming of?"

He answered, "I was at Hlader and Olaf Trygvason was laying a gold ring about my neck."

The earl says, "It will be a red ring Olaf will lay about thy neck if he catches thee. Take care of that! From me thou shalt enjoy all that is good, therefore betray me not."

They then kept themselves awake both; the one, as it were, watching upon the other. But towards day the earl suddenly dropped asleep; but his sleep was so quiet that he drew his heels under him, and raised his neck, as if going to rise, and screamed dreadfully high. On this Kark, dreadfully alarmed, drew a large knife out of his belt, stuck it in the earl's throat, and cut it across, and killed Earl Hakon. Then Kark cut off the earl's head, and ran away. Late in the day he came to Hlader, where he delivered the earl's head to King Olaf, and told all these circumstances of his own and Earl Hakon's doings. Olaf had him taken out and beheaded.

56. EARL HAKON'S HEAD.

King Olaf, and a vast number of bondes with him, then went out to Nidarholm, and had with him the heads of Earl Hakon and Kark. This holm was used then for a place of execution of thieves and

ill-doers, and there stood a gallows on it. He had the heads of the earl and of Kark hung upon it, and the whole army of the bondes cast stones at them, screaming and shouting that the one worthless fellow had followed the other. They then sent up to Gaulardal for the earl's dead body. So great was the enmity of the Throndhjem people against Earl Hakon, that no man could venture to call him by any other name than Hakon the Bad; and he was so called long after those days. Yet, sooth to say of Earl Hakon, he was in many respects fitted to be a chief: first, because he was descended from a high race; then because he had understanding and knowledge to direct a government; also manly courage in battle to gain victories, and good luck in killing his enemies. So says Thorleif Raudfeldson:—

In Norway's land was never known
A braver earl than the brave Hakon.
At sea, beneath the clear moon's light,
No braver man e'er sought to fight.
Nine kings to Odin's wide domain
Were sent, by Hakon's right hand slain!
So well the raven-flocks were fed—
So well the wolves were filled with dead!

Earl Hakon was very generous; but the greatest misfortunes attended even such a chief at the end of his days: and the great cause of this was that the time was come when heathen sacrifices and idolatrous worship were doomed to fall, and the holy faith and good customs to come in their place.

57. OLAF TRYGVASON ELECTED KING.

Olaf Trygvason was chosen at Throndhjem by the General Thing to be the king over the whole country, as Harald Harfager had been. The whole public and the people throughout all the land would listen to nothing else than that Olaf Trygvason should be king. Then Olaf went round the whole country, and brought it under his rule, and all the people of Norway gave in their submission; and also the chiefs in the Uplands and in Viken, who before had held their lands as fiefs from the Danish king, now became King Olaf's men, and held their hands from him. He went thus through the whole country during the first winter (A.D. 996) and the following summer. Earl Eirik, the son of Earl Hakon, his brother Svein, and their friends and relations, fled out of the country, and went east to Sweden to King Olaf the Swede, who gave them a good reception. So says Thord Kolbeinson:—

O thou whom bad men drove away,
After the bondes by foul play,
Took Hakon's life! Fate will pursue
These bloody wolves, and make them rue.
When the host came from out the West,
Like some tall stately war-ship's mast,
I saw the son of Trygve stand,
Surveying proud his native land.

And again,—

Eirik has more upon his mind,
Against the new Norse king designed,
Than by his words he seems to show—
And truly it may well be so.
Stubborn and stiff are Throndhjem men,
But Throndhjem's earl may come again;
In Swedish land he knows no rest—
Fierce wrath is gathering in his breast.

58. LODIN'S MARRIAGE

Lodin was the name of a man from Viken who was rich and of good family. He went often on merchant voyages, and sometimes on viking cruises. It happened one summer that he went on a merchant voyage with much merchandise in a ship of his own. He directed his course first to Eistland, and was there at a market in summer. To the place at which the market was held many merchant goods were brought, and also many thralls or slaves for sale. There Lodin saw a woman who was to be sold as a slave: and on looking at her he knew her to be Astrid Eirik's daughter, who had been married to King Trygve. But now she was altogether unlike what she had been when he last saw her; for now she was pale, meagre in countenance, and ill clad. He went up to her, and asked her how matters stood with her. She replied, "It is heavy to be told; for I have been sold as a slave, and now

again I am brought here for sale." After speaking together a little Astrid knew him, and begged him to buy her; and bring her home to her friends. "On this condition," said he, "I will bring thee home to Norway, that thou wilt marry me." Now as Astrid stood in great need, and moreover knew that Lodin was a man of high birth, rich, and brave, she promised to do so for her ransom. Lodin accordingly bought Astrid, took her home to Norway with him, and married her with her friends' consent. Their children were Thorkel Nefia, Ingerid, and Ingegerd. Ingebjorg and Astrid were daughters of Astrid by King Trygve. Eirik Bjodaskalle's sons were Sigird, Karlshofud, Jostein, and Thorkel Dydril, who were all rich and brave people who had estates east in the country. In Viken in the east dwelt two brothers, rich and of good descent; one called Thorgeir, and the other Hyrning; and they married Lodin and Astrid's daughters, Ingerid and Ingegerd.

59. OLAF BAPTIZES THE COUNTRY OF VIKEN.

When Harald Gormson, king of Denmark, had adopted Christianity, he sent a message over all his kingdom that all people should be baptized, and converted to the true faith. He himself followed his message, and used power and violence where nothing else would do. He sent two earls, Urguthrjot and Brimilskjar, with many people to Norway, to proclaim Christianity there. In Viken, which stood directly under the king's power, this succeeded, and many were baptized of the country folk. But when Svein Forked-beard, immediately after his father King Harald's death, went out on war expeditions in Saxland, Frisland, and at last in England, the Northmen who had taken up Christianity returned back to heathen sacrifices, just as before; and the people in the north of the country did the same. But now that Olaf Trygvason was king of Norway, he remained long during the summer (A.D. 996) in Viken, where many of his relatives and some of his brothers-in-law were settled, and also many who had been great friends of his father; so that he was received with the greatest affection. Olaf called together his mother's brothers, his stepfather Lodin, and his brothers-in-law Thorgeir and Hyrning, to speak with them, and to disclose with the greatest care the business which he desired they themselves should approve of, and support with all their power; namely, the proclaiming Christianity over all his kingdom. He would, he declared, either bring it to this, that all Norway should be Christian, or die. "I shall make you all," said he, "great and mighty men in promoting this work; for I trust to you most, as blood relations or brothers-in-law." All agreed to do what he asked, and to follow him in what he desired. King Olaf immediately made it known to the public that he recommended Christianity to all the people in his kingdom, which message was well received and approved of by those who had before given him their promise; and these being the most powerful among the people assembled, the others followed their example, and all the inhabitants of the east part of Viken allowed themselves to be baptized. The king then went to the north part of Viken and invited every man to accept Christianity; and those who opposed him he punished severely, killing some, mutilating others, and driving some into banishment. At length he brought it so far, that all the kingdom which his father King Trygve had ruled over, and also that of his relation Harald Grenske, accepted of Christianity; and during that summer (A.D. 996) and the following winter (A.D. 997) all Viken was made Christian.

60. OF THE HORDALAND PEOPLE.

Early in spring (A.D. 997) King Olaf set out from Viken with a great force northwards to Agder, and proclaimed that every man should be baptized. And thus the people received Christianity, for nobody dared oppose the king's will, wheresoever he came. In Hordaland, however, were many bold and great men of Hordakare's race. He, namely, had left four sons,—the first Thorleif Spake; the second, Ogmund, father of Thorolf Skialg, who was father of Erling of Sole; the third was Thord father of the Herse Klyp who killed King Sigurd Slef, Gunhild's son; and lastly, Olmod, father of Askel, whose son was Aslak Fitjaskalle; and that family branch was the greatest and most considered in Hordaland. Now when this family

heard the bad tidings, that the king was coming along the country from the eastward with a great force, and was breaking the ancient law of the people, and imposing punishment and hard conditions on all who opposed him, the relatives appointed a meeting to take counsel with each other, for they knew the king would come down upon them at once: and they all resolved to appear in force at the Gula-Thing, there to hold a conference with King Olaf Trygvason.

61. ROGALAND BAPTIZED.

When King Olaf came to Rogaland, he immediately summoned the people to a Thing; and when the bondes received the message-token for a Thing, they assembled in great numbers well armed. After they had come together, they resolved to choose three men, the best speakers of the whole, who should answer King Olaf, and argue with the king; and especially should decline to accept of anything against the old law, even if the king should require it of them. Now when the bondes came to the Thing, and the Thing was formed, King Olaf arose, and at first spoke good-humoredly to the people; but they observed he wanted them to accept Christianity, with all his fine words: and in the conclusion he let them know that those who should speak against him, and not submit to his proposal, must expect his displeasure and punishment, and all the ill that it was in his power to inflict. When he had ended his speech, one of the bondes stood up, who was considered the most eloquent, and who had been chosen as the first who should reply to King Olaf. But when he would begin to speak such a cough seized him, and such a difficulty of breathing, that he could not bring out a word, and had to sit down again. Then another bonde stood up, resolved not to let an answer be wanting, although it had gone so ill with the former: but he stammered so that he could not get a word uttered, and all present set up a laughter, amid which the bonde sat down again. And now the third stood up to make a speech against King Olaf's; but when he began he became so hoarse and husky in his throat, that nobody could hear a word he said, and he also had to sit down. There was none of the bondes now to speak against the king, and as nobody answered him there was no opposition; and it came to this, that all agreed to what the king had proposed. All the people of the Thing accordingly were baptized before the Thing was dissolved.

62. ERLING SKJALGSON'S WOOING.

King Olaf went with his men-at-arms to the Gula-Thing; for the bondes had sent him word that they would reply there to his speech. When both parties had come to the Thing, the king desired first to have a conference with the chief people of the country; and when the meeting was numerous the king set forth his errand,—that he desired them, according to his proposal, to allow themselves to be baptized. Then said Olmod the Old, "We relations have considered together this matter, and have come to one resolution. If thou thinkest, king, to force us who are related together to such things as to break our old law, or to bring us under thyself by any sort of violence, then will we stand against thee with all our might: and be the victory to him to whom fate ordains it. But if thou, king, wilt advance our relations' fortunes, then thou shalt have leave to do as thou desirest, and we will all serve thee with zeal in thy purpose."

The king replies, "What do you propose for obtaining this agreement?"

Then answers Olmod, "The first is, that thou wilt give thy sister Astrid in marriage to Erling Skjalgson, our relation, whom we look upon as the most hopeful young man in all Norway."

King Olaf replied, that this marriage appeared to him also very suitable; "as Erling is a man of good birth, and a good-looking man in appearance: but Astrid herself must answer to this proposal."

Thereupon the king spoke to his sister. She said, "It is but of little use that I am a king's sister, and a king's daughter, if I must marry a man who has no high dignity or office. I will rather wait a few years for a better match." Thus ended this conference.

63. HORDALAND BAPTIZED.

King Olaf took a falcon that belonged to Astrid, plucked off all its feathers, and then sent it to her. Then said Astrid, "Angry is my brother." And she stood up, and went to the king, who received

her kindly, and she said that she left it to the king to determine her marriage. "I think," said the king, "that I must have power enough in this land to raise any man I please to high dignity." Then the king ordered Olmod and Erling to be called to a conference, and all their relations; and the marriage was determined upon, and Astrid betrothed to Erling. Thereafter the king held the Thing, and recommended Christianity to the bondes; and as Olmod, and Erling, and all their relations, took upon themselves the most active part in forwarding the king's desire, nobody dared to speak against it; and all the people were baptized, and adopted Christianity.

64. ERLING SKJALGSON'S WEDDING.

Erling Skjalgson had his wedding in summer, and a great many people were assembled at it. King Olaf was also there, and offered Erling an earldom. Erling replied thus: "All my relations have been herses only, and I will take no higher title than they have; but this I will accept from thee, king, that thou makest me the greatest of that title in the country." The king consented; and at his departure the king invested his brother-in-law Erling with all the land north of the Sognefjord, and east to the Lidandisnes, on the same terms as Harald Harfager had given land to his sons, as before related.

65. RAUMSDAL AND FJORD-DISTRICTS BAPTIZED.

The same harvest King Olaf summoned the bondes to a Thing of the four districts at Dragseid, in Stad: and there the people from Sogn, the Fjord-districts, South More, and Raumsdal, were summoned to meet. King Olaf came there with a great many people who had followed him from the eastward, and also with those who had joined him from Rogaland and Hordaland. When the king came to the Thing, he proposed to them there, as elsewhere, Christianity; and as the king had such a powerful host with him, they were frightened. The king offered them two conditions,—either to accept Christianity, or to fight. But the bondes saw they were in no condition to fight the king, and resolved, therefore, that all the people should agree to be baptized. The king proceeded afterwards to North More, and baptized all that district. He then sailed to Hlader, in Throndhjem; had the temple there razed to the ground; took all the ornaments and all property out of the temple, and from the gods in it; and among other things the great gold ring which Earl Hakon had ordered to be made, and which hung in the door of the temple; and then had the temple burnt. But when the bondes heard of this, they sent out a war-arrow as a token through the whole district, ordering out a warlike force, and intended to meet the king with it. In the meantime King Olaf sailed with a war force out of the Fjord along the coast northward, intending to proceed to Halogaland, and baptize there. When he came north to Bjarnaurar, he heard from Halogaland that a force was assembled there to defend the country against the king. The chiefs of this force were Harek of Thjotta, Thoror Hjort from Vagar, and Eyvind Kinrifa. Now when King Olaf heard this, he turned about and sailed southwards along the land; and when he got south of Stad proceeded at his leisure, and came early in winter (A.D. 998) all the way east to Viken.

66. OLAF PROPOSES MARRIAGE TO QUEEN SIGRID.

Queen Sigrid in Svithjod, who had for surname the Haughty, sat in her mansion, and during the same winter messengers went between King Olaf and Sigrid to propose his courtship to her, and she had no objection; and the matter was fully and fast resolved upon. Thereupon King Olaf sent to Queen Sigrid the great gold ring he had taken from the temple door of Hlader, which was considered a distinguished ornament. The meeting for concluding the business was appointed to be in spring on the frontier, at the Gaut river. Now the ring which King Olaf had sent Queen Sigrid was highly prized by all men; yet the queen's gold-smiths, two brothers, who took the ring in their hands, and weighed it, spoke quietly to each other about it, and in a manner that made the queen call them to her, and ask "what they smiled at?" But they would not say a word, and she commanded them to say what it was they had discovered. Then they said the ring is false. Upon this she ordered the ring to

be broken into pieces, and it was found to be copper inside. Then the queen was enraged, and said that Olaf would deceive her in more ways than this one. In the same year (A.D. 998) King Olaf went into Ringenke, and there the people also were baptized.

67. OLAF HARALDSON BAPTIZED.

Asta, the daughter of Gudbrand, soon after the fall of Harald Grenske married again a man who was called Sigurd Syr, who was a king in Ringerike. Sigurd was a son of Halfdan, and grandson of Sigurd Hrise, who was a son of Harald Harfager. Olaf, the son of Asta and Harald Grenske, lived with Asta, and was brought up from childhood in the house of his stepfather, Sigurd Syr. Now when King Olaf Trygvason came to Ringerike to spread Christianity, Sigurd Syr and his wife allowed themselves to be baptized, along with Olaf her son; and Olaf Trygvason was godfather to Olaf, the stepson of Harald Grenske. Olaf was then three years old. Olaf returned from thence to Viken, where he remained all winter. He had now been three years king in Norway (A.D. 998).

68. MEETING OF OLAF AND SIGRID.

Early in spring (A.D. 998) King Olaf went eastwards to Konungahella to the meeting with Queen Sigrid; and when they met the business was considered about which the winter before they had held communication, namely, their marriage; and the business seemed likely to be concluded. But when Olaf insisted that Sigrid should let herself be baptized, she answered thus:—"I must not part from the faith which I have held, and my forefathers before me; and, on the other hand, I shall make no objection to your believing in the god that pleases you best." Then King Olaf was enraged, and answered in a passion, "Why should I care to have thee, an old faded woman, and a heathen jade?" and therewith struck her in the face with his glove which he held in his hands, rose up, and they parted. Sigrid said, "This may some day be thy death." The king set off to Viken, the queen to Svithjod.

69. THE BURNING OF WARLOCKS.

Then the king proceeded to Tunsberg, and held a Thing, at which he declared in a speech that all the men of whom it should be known to a certainty that they dealt with evil spirits, or in witchcraft, or were sorcerers, should be banished forth of the land. Thereafter the king had all the neighborhood ransacked after such people, and called them all before him; and when they were brought to the Thing there was a man among them called Eyvind Kelda, a grandson of Ragnvald Rettilbeine, Harald Harfager's son. Eyvind was a sorcerer, and particularly knowing in witchcraft. The king let all these men be seated in one room, which was well adorned, and made a great feast for them, and gave them strong drink in plenty. Now when they were all very drunk, he ordered the house be set on fire, and it and all the people within it were consumed, all but Eyvind Kelda, who contrived to escape by the smoke-hole in the roof. And when he had got a long way off, he met some people on the road going to the king, and he told them to tell the king that Eyvind Kelda had slipped away from the fire, and would never come again in King Olaf's power, but would carry on his arts of witchcraft as much as ever. When the people came to the king with such a message from Eyvind, the king was ill pleased that Eyvind had escaped death.

70. EYVIND KELDA'S DEATH.

When spring (A.D. 998) came King Olaf went out to Viken, and was on visits to his great farms. He sent notice over all Viken that he would call out an army in summer, and proceed to the north parts of the country. Then he went north to Agder; and when Easter was approaching he took the road to Rogaland with 300 (=360) men, and came on Easter evening north to Ogvaldsnes, in Kormt Island, where an Easter feast was prepared for him. That same night came Eyvind Kelda to the island with a well-manned long-ship, of which the whole crew consisted of sorcerers and other dealers with evil spirits. Eyvind went from his ship to the land with his followers, and there they played many of their pranks of witchcraft. Eyvind clothed them with caps of darkness, and so thick a mist that the king and his men could see

nothing of them; but when they came near to the house at Ogvaldsnes, it became clear day. Then it went differently from what Eyvind had intended: for now there came just such a darkness over him and his comrades in witchcraft as they had made before, so that they could see no more from their eyes than from the back of their heads but went round and round in a circle upon the island. When the king's watchman saw them going about, without knowing what people these were, they told the king. Thereupon he rose up with his people, put on his clothes, and when he saw Eyvind with his men wandering about he ordered his men to arm, and examine what folk these were. The king's men discovered it was Eyvind, took him and all his company prisoners, and brought them to the king. Eyvind now told all he had done on his journey. Then the king ordered these all to be taken out to a skerry which was under water in flood tide, and there to be left bound. Eyvind and all with him left their lives on this rock, and the skerry is still called Skrattasker.

71. OLAF AND ODIN'S APPARITION.

It is related that once on a time King Olaf was at a feast at this Ogvaldsnes, and one eventide there came to him an old man very gifted in words, and with a broad-brimmed hat upon his head. He was one-eyed, and had something to tell of every land. He entered into conversation with the king; and as the king found much pleasure in the guest's speech, he asked him concerning many things, to which the guest gave good answers: and the king sat up late in the evening. Among other things, the king asked him if he knew who the Ogvald had been who had given his name both to the ness and to the house. The guest replied, that this Ogvald was a king, and a very valiant man, and that he made great sacrifices to a cow which he had with him wherever he went, and considered it good for his health to drink her milk. This same King Ogvald had a battle with a king called Varin, in which battle Ogvald fell. He was buried under a mound close to the house; "and there stands his stone over him, and close to it his cow also is laid." Such and many other things, and ancient events, the king inquired after. Now, when the king had sat late into the night, the bishop reminded him that it was time to go to bed, and the king did so. But after the king was undressed, and had laid himself in bed, the guest sat upon the foot-stool before the bed, and still spoke long with the king; for after one tale was ended, he still wanted a new one. Then the bishop observed to the king, it was time to go to sleep, and the king did so; and the guest went out. Soon after the king awoke, asked for the guest, and ordered him to be called, but the guest was not to be found. The morning after, the king ordered his cook and cellar-master to be called, and asked if any strange person had been with them. They said, that as they were making ready the meat a man came to them, and observed that they were cooking very poor meat for the king's table; whereupon he gave them two thick and fat pieces of beef, which they boiled with the rest of the meat. Then the king ordered that all the meat should be thrown away, and said this man can be no other than the Odin whom the heathens have so long worshipped; and added, "but Odin shall not deceive us."

72. THE THING IN THRONDHJEM.

King Olaf collected a great army in the east of the country towards summer, and sailed with it north to Nidaros in the Thronhjelm country. From thence he sent a message-token over all the fjord, calling the people of eight different districts to a Thing; but the bondes changed the Thing-token into a war-token; and called together all men, free and unfree, in all the Thronhjelm land. Now when the king met the Thing, the whole people came fully armed. After the Thing was seated, the king spoke, and invited them to adopt Christianity; but he had only spoken a short time when the bondes called out to him to be silent, or they would attack him and drive him away. "We did so," said they, "with Hakon foster-son of Athelstan, when he brought us the same message, and we held him in quite as much respect as we hold thee." When King Olaf saw how incensed the bondes were, and that they had such a war force that he could make no resistance, he turned his speech as if he would give way to the bondes, and said, "I wish only to

be in a good understanding with you as of old; and I will come to where ye hold your greatest sacrifice-festival, and see your customs, and thereafter we shall consider which to hold by." And in this all agreed; and as the king spoke mildly and friendly with the bondes, their answer was appeased, and their conference with the king went off peacefully. At the close of it a midsummer sacrifice was fixed to take place in Maeren, and all chiefs and great bondes to attend it as usual. The king was to be at it.

73. JARNSKEGGE OR IRON BEARD.

There was a great bonde called Skegge, and sometimes Jarnskegge, or Iron Beard, who dwelt in Uphaug in Yrjar. He spoke first at the Thing to Olaf; and was the foremost man of the bondes in speaking against Christianity. The Thing was concluded in this way for that time,—the bondes returned home, and the king went to Hlader.

74. THE FEAST AT HLADER.

King Olaf lay with his ships in the river Nid, and had thirty vessels, which were manned with many brave people; but the king himself was often at Hlader, with his court attendants. As the time now was approaching at which the sacrifices should be made at Maeren, the king prepared a great feast at Hlader, and sent a message to the districts of Strind, Gaulardal, and out to Orkadall, to invite the chiefs and other great bondes. When the feast was ready, and the chiefs assembled, there was a handsome entertainment the first evening, at which plenty of liquor went round, and the guests were made very drunk. The night after they all slept in peace. The following morning, when the king was dressed, he had the early mass sung before him; and when the mass was over, ordered to sound the trumpets for a House Thing: upon which all his men left the ships to come up to the Thing. When the Thing was seated, the king stood up, and spoke thus: "We held a Thing at Frosta, and there I invited the bondes to allow themselves to be baptized; but they, on the other hand, invited me to offer sacrifice to their gods, as King Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, had done; and thereafter it was agreed upon between us that we should meet at Maerin, and there make a great sacrifice. Now if I, along with you, shall turn again to making sacrifice, then will I make the greatest of sacrifices that are in use; and I will sacrifice men. But I will not select slaves or malefactors for this, but will take the greatest men only to be offered to the gods; and for this I select Orm Lygra of Medallhus, Stykrar of Gimsar, Kar of Gryting, Asbjorn Thorbergson of Varnes, Orm of Lyxa, Haldor of Skerdingsstedja;" and besides these he named five others of the principal men. All these, he said, he would offer in sacrifice to the gods for peace and a fruitful season; and ordered them to be laid hold of immediately. Now when the bondes saw that they were not strong enough to make head against the king, they asked for peace, and submitted wholly to the king's pleasure. So it was settled that all the bondes who had come there should be baptized, and should take an oath to the king to hold by the right faith, and to renounce sacrifice to the gods. The king then kept all these men as hostages who came to his feast, until they sent him their sons, brothers, or other near relations.

75. OF THE THING IN THRONDHJEM.

King Olaf went in with all his forces into the Throndhjem country; and when he came to Maeren all among the chiefs of the Throndhjem people who were most opposed to Christianity were assembled, and had with them all the great bondes who had before made sacrifice at that place. There was thus a greater multitude of bondes than there had been at the Frosta-Thing. Now the king let the people be summoned to the Thing, where both parties met armed; and when the Thing was seated the king made a speech, in which he told the people to go over to Christianity. Jarnskegge replies on the part of the bondes, and says that the will of the bondes is now, as formerly, that the king should not break their laws. "We want, king," said he, "that thou shouldst offer sacrifice, as other kings before thee have done." All the bondes applauded his speech with a loud shout, and said they would have all things according to what Skegge said. Then the king said he would go into the temple of

their gods with them, and see what the practices were when they sacrificed. The bondes thought well of this proceeding, and both parties went to the temple.

76. THE THRONDHJEM PEOPLE BAPTIZED.

Now King Olaf entered into the temple with some few of his men and a few bondes; and when the king came to where their gods were, Thor, as the most considered among their gods, sat there adorned with gold and silver. The king lifted up his gold-inlaid axe which he carried in his hands, and struck Thor so that the image rolled down from its seat. Then the king's men turned to and threw down all the gods from their seats; and while the king was in the temple, Jarnskegge was killed outside of the temple doors, and the king's men did it. When the king came forth out of the temple he offered the bondes two conditions,—that all should accept of Christianity forthwith, or that they should fight with him. But as Skegge was killed, there was no leader in the bondes' army to raise the banner against King Olaf; so they took the other condition, to surrender to the king's will and obey his order. Then King Olaf had all the people present baptized, and took hostages from them for their remaining true to Christianity; and he sent his men round to every district, and no man in the Throndhjem country opposed Christianity, but all people took baptism.

77. A TOWN IN THE THRONDHJEM COUNTRY.

King Olaf with his people went out to Nidaros, and made houses on the flat side of the river Nid, which he raised to be a merchant town, and gave people ground to build houses upon. The king's house he had built just opposite Skipakrok; and he transported thither, in harvest, all that was necessary for his winter residence, and had many people about him there.

78. KING OLAF'S MARRIAGE.

King Olaf appointed a meeting with the relations of Jarnskegge, and offered them the compensation or penalty for his bloodshed; for there were many bold men who had an interest in that business. Jarnskegge had a daughter called Gudrun; and at last it was agreed upon between the parties that the king should take her in marriage. When the wedding day came King Olaf and Gudrun went to bed together. As soon as Gudrun, the first night they lay together, thought the king was asleep, she drew a knife, with which she intended to run him through; but the king saw it, took the knife from her, got out of bed, and went to his men, and told them what had happened. Gudrun also took her clothes, and went away along with all her men who had followed her thither. Gudrun never came into the king's bed again.

79. BUILDING OF THE SHIP CRANE.

The same autumn (A.D. 998) King Olaf laid the keel of a great long-ship out on the strand at the river Nid. It was a snekkja; and he employed many carpenters upon her, so that early in winter the vessel was ready. It had thirty benches for rowers, was high in stem and stern, but was not broad. The king called this ship Tranen (the Crane). After Jarnskegge's death his body was carried to Yrjar, and lies there in the Skegge mound on Austrat.

80. THANGBRAND THE PRIEST GOES TO ICELAND.

When King Olaf Trygvason had been two years king of Norway (A.D. 997), there was a Saxon priest in his house who was called Thangbrand, a passionate, ungovernable man, and a great manslayer; but he was a good scholar, and a clever man. The king would not have him in his house upon account of his misdeeds; but gave him the errand to go to Iceland, and bring that land to the Christian faith. The king gave him a merchant vessel: and, as far as we know of this voyage of his, he landed first in Iceland at Austfjord in the southern Alptfjord, and passed the winter in the house of Hal of Sida. Thangbrand proclaimed Christianity in Iceland, and on his persuasion Hal and all his house people, and

many other chiefs, allowed themselves to be baptized; but there were many more who spoke against it. Thorvald Veile and Veleride the skald composed a satire about Thangbrand; but he killed them both outright. Thangbrand was two years in Iceland, and was the death of three men before he left it.

81. OF SIGURD AND HAUK.

There was a man called Sigurd, and another called Hauk, both of Halogaland, who often made merchant voyages. One summer (A.D. 998) they had made a voyage westward to England; and when they came back to Norway they sailed northwards along the coast, and at North More they met King Olaf's people. When it was told the king that some Halogaland people were come who were heathen, he ordered the steersmen to be brought to him, and he asked them if they would consent to be baptized; to which they replied, no. The king spoke with them in many ways, but to no purpose. He then threatened them with death and torture: but they would not allow themselves to be moved. He then had them laid in irons, and kept them in chains in his house for some time, and often conversed with them, but in vain. At last one night they disappeared, without any man being able to conjecture how they got away. But about harvest they came north to Harek of Thjotta, who received them kindly, and with whom they stopped all winter (A.D. 999), and were hospitably entertained.

82. OF HAREK OF THJOTTA.

It happened one good-weather day in spring (A.D. 999) that Harek was at home in his house with only few people, and time hung heavy on his hands. Sigurd asked him if he would row a little for amusement. Harek was willing; and they went to the shore, and drew down a six-oared skiff; and Sigurd took the mast and rigging belonging to the boat out of the boat-house, for they often used to sail when they went for amusement on the water. Harek went out into the boat to hang the rudder. The brothers Sigurd and Hauk, who were very strong men, were fully armed, as they were used to go about at home among the peasants. Before they went out to the boat they threw into her some butter-kits and a bread-chest, and carried between them a great keg of ale. When they had rowed a short way from the island the brothers hoisted the sail, while Harek was seated at the helm; and they sailed away from the island. Then the two brothers went aft to where Harek the bonde was sitting; and Sigurd says to him, "Now thou must choose one of these conditions,—first, that we brothers direct this voyage; or, if not, that we bind thee fast and take the command; or, third, that we kill thee." Harek saw how matters stood with him. As a single man, he was not better than one of those brothers, even if he had been as well armed; so it appeared to him wisest to let them determine the course to steer, and bound himself by oath to abide by this condition. On this Sigurd took the helm, and steered south along the land, the brothers taking particular care that they did not encounter people. The wind was very favourable; and they held on sailing along until they came south to Thronthjem and to Nidaros, where they found the king. Then the king called Harek to him, and in a conference desired him to be baptized. Harek made objections; and although the king and Harek talked over it many times, sometimes in the presence of other people, and sometimes alone, they could not agree upon it. At last the king says to Harek, "Now thou mayst return home, and I will do thee no injury; partly because we are related together, and partly that thou mayst not have it to say that I caught thee by a trick: but know for certain that I intend to come north next summer to visit you Halogalanders, and ye shall then see if I am not able to punish those who reject Christianity." Harek was well pleased to get away as fast as he could. King Olaf gave Harek a good boat of ten or twelve pair of oars, and let it be fitted out with the best of everything needful; and besides he gave Harek thirty men, all lads of mettle, and well appointed.

83. EYVIND KINRIFA'S DEATH.

Harek of Thjotta went away from the town as fast as he could; but Hauk and Sigurd remained in the king's house, and both took baptism. Harek pursued his voyage until he came to Thjotta. He

sent immediately a message to his friend Eyvind Kinrifa, with the word that he had been with King Olaf; but would not let himself be cowed down to accept Christianity. The message at the same time informed him that King Olaf intended coming to the north in summer against them, and they must be at their posts to defend themselves; it also begged Eyvind to come and visit him, the sooner the better. When this message was delivered to Eyvind, he saw how very necessary it was to devise some counsel to avoid falling into the king's hands. He set out, therefore, in a light vessel with a few hands as fast as he could. When he came to Thjotta he was received by Harek in the most friendly way, and they immediately entered into conversation with each other behind the house. When they had spoken together but a short time, King Olaf's men, who had secretly followed Harek to the north, came up, and took Eyvind prisoner, and carried him away to their ship. They did not halt on their voyage until they came to Thronthjem, and presented themselves to King Olaf at Nidaros. Then Eyvind was brought up to a conference with the king, who asked him to allow himself to be baptized, like other people; but Eyvind decidedly answered he would not. The king still, with persuasive words, urged him to accept Christianity, and both he and the bishop used many suitable arguments; but Eyvind would not allow himself to be moved. The king offered him gifts and great fiefs, but Eyvind refused all. Then the king threatened him with tortures and death, but Eyvind was steadfast. Then the king ordered a pan of glowing coals to be placed upon Eyvind's belly, which burst asunder. Eyvind cried, "Take away the pan, and I will say something before I die," which also was done. The king said, "Wilt thou now, Eyvind, believe in Christ?" "No," said Eyvind, "I can take no baptism; for I am an evil spirit put into a man's body by the sorcery of Fins because in no other way could my father and mother have a child." With that died Eyvind, who had been one of the greatest sorcerers.

84. HALOGALAND MADE CHRISTIAN.

The spring after (A.D. 999) King Olaf fitted out and manned his ships, and commanded himself his ship the Crane. He had many and smart people with him; and when he was ready, he sailed northwards with his fleet past Bryda, and to Halogaland. Where-soever he came to the land, or to the islands, he held a Thing, and told the people to accept the right faith, and to be baptized. No man dared to say anything against it, and the whole country he passed through was made Christian. King Olaf was a guest in the house of Harek of Thjotta, who was baptized with all his people. At parting the king gave Harek good presents; and he entered into the king's service, and got fiefs, and the privileges of lendsman from the king.

85. THORER HJORT'S DEATH.

There was a bonde, by name Raud the Strong, who dwelt in Godey in Salten fjord. Raud was a very rich man, who had many house servants; and likewise was a powerful man, who had many Fins in his service when he wanted them. Raud was a great idolater, and very skillful in witchcraft, and was a great friend of Thorer Hjort, before spoken of. Both were great chiefs. Now when they heard that King Olaf was coming with a great force from the south to Halogaland, they gathered together an army, ordered out ships, and they too had a great force on foot. Raud had a large ship with a gilded head formed like a dragon, which ship had thirty rowing benches, and even for that kind of ship was very large. Thorer Hjort had also a large ship. These men sailed southwards with their ships against King Olaf, and as soon as they met gave battle. A great battle there was, and a great fall of men; but principally on the side of the Halogalanders, whose ships were cleared of men, so that a great terror came upon them. Raud rode with his dragon out to sea, and set sail. Raud had always a fair wind wheresoever he wished to sail, which came from his arts of witchcraft; and, to make a short story, he came home to Godey. Thorer Hjort fled from the ships up to the land: but King Olaf landed people, followed those who fled, and killed them. Usually the king was the foremost in such skirmishes, and was so now. When the king saw where Thorer Hjort, who was quicker on foot than any man, was

running to, he ran after him with his dog Vige. The king said, "Vige! Vige! Catch the deer." Vige ran straight in upon him; on which Thorer halted, and the king threw a spear at him. Thorer struck with his sword at the dog, and gave him a great wound; but at the same moment the king's spear flew under Thorer's arm, and went through and through him, and came out at his other-side. There Thorer left his life; but Vige was carried to the ships.

86. KING OLAF'S VOYAGE TO GODEY.

King Olaf gave life and freedom to all the men who asked it and agreed to become Christian. King Olaf sailed with his fleet northwards along the coast, and baptized all the people among whom he came; and when he came north to Salten fjord, he intended to sail into it to look for Raud, but a dreadful tempest and storm was raging in the fjord. They lay there a whole week, in which the same weather was raging within the fjord, while without there was a fine brisk wind only, fair for proceeding north along the land. Then the king continued his voyage north to Omd, where all the people submitted to Christianity. Then the king turned about and sailed to the south again; but when he came to the north side of Salten fjord, the same tempest was blowing, and the sea ran high out from the fjord, and the same kind of storm prevailed for several days while the king was lying there. Then the king applied to Bishop Sigurd, and asked him if he knew any counsel about it; and the bishop said he would try if God would give him power to conquer these arts of the Devil.

87. OF RAUD'S BEING TORTURED.

Bishop Sigurd took all his mass robes and went forward to the bow of the king's ship; ordered tapers to be lighted, and incense to be brought out. Then he set the crucifix upon the stem of the vessel, read the Evangelist and many prayers, besprinkled the whole ship with holy water, and then ordered the ship-tent to be stowed away, and to row into the fjord. The king ordered all the other ships to follow him. Now when all was ready on board the Crane to row, she went into the fjord without the rowers finding any wind; and the sea was curled about their keel track like as in a calm, so quiet and still was the water; yet on each side of them the waves were lashing up so high that they hid the sight of the mountains. And so the one ship followed the other in the smooth sea track; and they proceeded this way the whole day and night, until they reached Godey. Now when they came to Raud's house his great ship, the dragon, was afloat close to the land. King Olaf went up to the house immediately with his people; made an attack on the loft in which Raud was sleeping, and broke it open. The men rushed in: Raud was taken and bound, and of the people with him some were killed and some made prisoners. Then the king's men went to a lodging in which Raud's house servants slept, and killed some, bound others, and beat others. Then the king ordered Raud to be brought before him, and offered him baptism. "And," says the king, "I will not take thy property from thee, but rather be thy friend, if thou wilt make thyself worthy to be so." Raud exclaimed with all his might against the proposal, saying he would never believe in Christ, and making his scoff of God. Then the king was wroth, and said Raud should die the worst of deaths. And the king ordered him to be bound to a beam of wood, with his face uppermost, and a round pin of wood set between his teeth to force his mouth open. Then the king ordered an adder to be stuck into the mouth of him; but the serpent would not go into his mouth, but shrunk back when Raud breathed against it. Now the king ordered a hollow branch of an angelica root to be stuck into Raud's mouth; others say the king put his horn into his mouth, and forced the serpent to go in by holding a red-hot iron before the opening. So the serpent crept into the mouth of Raud and down his throat, and gnawed its way out of his side; and thus Raud perished. King Olaf took here much gold and silver, and other property of weapons, and many sorts of precious effects; and all the men who were with Raud he either had baptized, or if they refused had them killed or tortured. Then the king took the dragonship which Raud had owned, and steered it himself; for it was a much larger and handsomer vessel than the Crane. In front it had a dragon's head, and aft a crook, which turned up, and ended with the figure of the dragon's tail.

The carved work on each side of the stem and stern was gilded. This ship the king called the Serpent. When the sails were hoisted they represented, as it were, the dragon's wings; and the ship was the handsomest in all Norway. The islands on which Raud dwelt were called Gylling and Haering; but the whole islands together were called Godey Isles, and the current between the isles and the mainland the Godey Stream. King Olaf baptized the whole people of the fjord, and then sailed southwards along the land; and on this voyage happened much and various things, which are set down in tales and sagas,—namely, how witches and evil spirits tormented his men, and sometimes himself; but we will rather write about what occurred when King Olaf made Norway Christian, or in the other countries in which he advanced Christianity. The same autumn Olaf with his fleet returned to Throndhjem, and landed at Nidaros, where he took up his winter abode. What I am now going to write about concerns the Icelanders.

88. OF THE ICELANDERS.

Kjartan Olafson, a son's son of Hoskuld, and a daughter's son of Egil Skallagrimson, came the same autumn (A.D. 999) from Iceland to Nidaros, and he was considered to be the most agreeable and hopeful man of any born in Iceland. There was also Haldor, a son of Gudmund of Modruveller; and Kolbein, a son of Thord, Frey's gode, and a brother's son of Brennufole; together with Sverting, a son of the gode Runolf. All these were heathens; and besides them there were many more,—some men of power, others common men of no property. There came also from Iceland considerable people, who, by Thangbrand's help, had been made Christians; namely, Gissur the white, a son of Teit Ketilbjornson; and his mother was Alof, daughter of herse Bodvar, who was the son of Vikingakare. Bodvar's brother was Sigurd, father of Eirik Bjodaskalle, whose daughter Astrid was King Olaf's mother. Hjalte Skeggjason was the name of another Iceland man, who was married to Vilborg, Gissur the White's daughter. Hjalte was also a Christian; and King Olaf was very friendly to his relations Gissur and Hjalte, who live with him. But the Iceland men who directed the ships, and were heathens, tried to sail away as soon as the king came to the town of Nidaros, for they were told the king forced all men to become Christians; but the wind came stiff against them, and drove them back to Nidarholm. They who directed the ships were Thorarin Nefjulson, the skald Halfred Ottarson, Brand the Generous, and Thorleik, Brand's son. It was told the king that there were Icelanders with ships there, and all were heathen, and wanted to fly from a meeting with the king. Then the king sent them a message forbidding them to sail, and ordering them to bring their ships up to the town, which they did, but without discharging the cargoes.

(They carried on their dealings and held a market at the king's pier. In spring they tried three times to slip away, but never succeeded; so they continued lying at the king's pier. It happened one fine day that many set out to swim for amusement, and among them was a man who distinguished himself above the others in all bodily exercises. Kjartan challenged Halfred Vandredaskald to try himself in swimming against this man, but he declined it. "Then will I make a trial," said Kjartan, casting off his clothes, and springing into the water. Then he set after the man, seized hold of his foot, and dives with him under water. They come up again, and without speaking a word dive again, and are much longer under water than the first time. They come up again, and without saying a word dive a third time, until Kjartan thought it was time to come up again, which, however, he could in no way accomplish, which showed sufficiently the difference in their strength. They were under water so long that Kjartan was almost drowned. They then came up, and swam to land. This Northman asked what the Icelanders' name was. Kjartan tells his name.

He says, "Thou art a good swimmer; but art thou expert also in other exercises?"

Kjartan replied, that such expertness was of no great value.

The Northman asks, "Why dost thou not inquire of me such things as I have asked thee about?"

Kjartan replies, "It is all one to me who thou art, or what thy name is."

"Then will I," says he, "tell thee: I am Olaf Trygvason."

He asked Kjartan much about Iceland, which he answered generally, and wanted to withdraw as hastily as he could; but the king said, "Here is a cloak which I will give thee, Kjartan." And Kjartan took the cloak with many thanks.)

89. BAPTISM OF THE ICELANDERS.

When Michaelmas came, the king had high mass sung with great splendour. The Icelanders went there, listening to the fine singing and the sound of the bells; and when they came back to their ships every man told his opinion of the Christian man's worship. Kjartan expressed his pleasure at it, but most of the others scoffed at it; and it went according to the proverb, "the king had many ears," for this was told to the king. He sent immediately that very day a message to Kjartan to come to him. Kjartan went with some men, and the king received him kindly. Kjartan was a very stout and handsome man, and of ready and agreeable speech. After the king and Kjartan had conversed a little, the king asked him to adopt Christianity. Kjartan replies, that he would not say no to that, if he thereby obtained the king's friendship; and as the king promised him the fullest friendship, they were soon agreed. The next day Kjartan was baptized, together with his relation Bolle Thorlakson, and all their fellow-travelers. Kjartan and Bolle were the king's guests as long as they were in their white baptismal clothes, and the king had much kindness for them. Wherever they came they were looked upon as people of distinction.

90. HALFRED VANDREDASKALD BAPTIZED.

As King Olaf one day was walking in the street some men met him, and he who went the foremost saluted the king. The king asked the man his name, and he called himself Halfred.

"Art thou the skald?" said the king.

"I can compose poetry," replied he.

"Wilt thou then adopt Christianity, and come into my service?" asked the king.

"If I am baptized," replies he, "it must be on one condition,—that thou thyself art my godfather; for no other will I have."

The king replies, "That I will do." And Halfred was baptized, the king holding him during the baptism.

Afterwards the king said, "Wilt thou enter into my service?"

Halfred replied, "I was formerly in Earl Hakon's court; but now I will neither enter into thine nor into any other service, unless thou promise me it shall never be my lot to be driven away from thee."

"It has been reported to me," said the king, "that thou are neither so prudent nor so obedient as to fulfil my commands."

"In that case," replied Halfred, "put me to death."

"Thou art a skald who composes difficulties," says the king; "but into my service, Halfred, thou shalt be received."

Halfred says, "if I am to be named the composer of difficulties, what cost thou give me, king, on my name-day?"

The king gave him a sword without a scabbard, and said, "Now compose me a song upon this sword, and let the word sword be in every line of the strophe." Halfred sang thus:

This sword of swords is my reward.
For him who knows to wield a sword,
And with his sword to serve his lord,
Yet wants a sword, his lot is hard.
I would I had my good lord's leave
For this good sword a sheath to choose:
I'm worth three swords when men use,
But for the sword-sheath now I grieve.

Then the king gave him the scabbard, observing that the word sword was wanting in one line of his strophe. "But there instead are three swords in one of the lines," says Halfred. "That is true," replies the king.—Out of Halfred's lays we have taken the most of the true and faithful accounts that are here related about Olaf Trygvason.

91. THANGBRAND RETURNS FROM ICELAND.

The same harvest (A.D. 999) Thangbrand the priest came back from Iceland to King Olaf, and told the ill success of his journey;

namely, that the Icelanders had made lampoons about him; and that some even sought to kill him, and there was little hope of that country ever being made Christian. King Olaf was so enraged at this, that he ordered all the Icelanders to be assembled by sound of horn, and was going to kill all who were in the town, but Kjartan, Gissur, and Hjalte, with the other Icelanders who had become Christians, went to him, and said, "King, thou must not fail from thy word—that however much any man may irritate thee, thou wilt forgive him if he turn from heathenism and become Christian. All the Icelanders here are willing to be baptized; and through them we may find means to bring Christianity into Iceland: for there are many amongst them, sons of considerable people in Iceland, whose friends can advance the cause; but the priest Thangbrand proceeded there as he did here in the court, with violence and manslaughter, and such conduct the people there would not submit to." The king hearkened to those remonstrances; and all the Iceland men who were there were baptized.

92. OF KING OLAF'S FEATS.

King Olaf was more expert in all exercises than any man in Norway whose memory is preserved to us in sagas; and he was stronger and more agile than most men, and many stories are written down about it. One is that he ascended the Smalsarhorn, and fixed his shield upon the very peak. Another is, that one of his followers had climbed up the peak after him, until he came to where he could neither get up nor down; but the king came to his help, climbed up to him, took him under his arm, and bore him to the flat ground. King Olaf could run across the oars outside of the vessel while his men were rowing the Serpent. He could play with three daggers, so that one was always in the air, and he took the one falling by the handle. He could walk all round upon the ship's rails, could strike and cut equally well with both hands, and could cast two spears at once. King Olaf was a very merry frolicsome man; gay and social; was very violent in all respects; was very generous; was very finical in his dress, but in battle he exceeded all in bravery. He was distinguished for cruelty when he was enraged, and tortured many of his enemies. Some he burnt in fire; some he had torn in pieces by mad dogs; some he had mutilated, or cast down from high precipices. On this account his friends were attached to him warmly, and his enemies feared him greatly; and thus he made such a fortunate advance in his undertakings, for some obeyed his will out of the friendliest zeal, and others out of dread.

93. BAPTISM OF LEIF EIRIKSON.

Leif, a son of Eirik the Red, who first settled in Greenland, came this summer (A.D. 999) from Greenland to Norway; and as he met King Olaf he adopted Christianity, and passed the winter (A.D. 1000) with the king.

94. FALL OF KING GUDROD.

Gudrod, a son of Eirik Bloodaxe and Gunhild, had been ravaging in the west countries ever since he fled from Norway before the Earl Hakon. But the summer before mentioned (A.D. 999), where King Olaf Trygvason had ruled four years over Norway, Gudrod came to the country, and had many ships of war with him. He had sailed from England; and when he thought himself near to the Norway coast, he steered south along the land, to the quarter where it was least likely King Olaf would be. Gudrod sailed in this way south to Viken; and as soon as he came to the land he began to plunder, to subject the people to him, and to demand that they should accept of him as king. Now as the country people saw that a great army was come upon them, they desired peace and terms. They offered King Gudrod to send a Thing-message over all the country, and to accept of him at the Thing as king, rather than suffer from his army; but they desired delay until a fixed day, while the token of the Thing's assembling was going round through the land. The king demanded maintenance during the time this delay lasted. The bondes preferred entertaining the king as a guest, by turns, as long as he required it; and the king accepted of the proposal to go about with some of his men as a guest from place to place in the land, while others of his men re-

mained to guard the ships. When King Olaf's relations, Hyrning and Thorgeir, heard of this, they gathered men, fitted out ships, and went northwards to Viken. They came in the night with their men to a place at which King Gudrod was living as a guest, and attacked him with fire and weapons; and there King Gudrod fell, and most of his followers. Of those who were with his ships some were killed, some slipped away and fled to great distances; and now were all the sons of Eirik and Gunhild dead.

95. BUILDING OF THE SHIP LONG SERPENT.

The winter after, King Olaf came from Halogaland (A.D. 1000), he had a great vessel built at Hladhamrar, which was larger than any ship in the country, and of which the beam-knees are still to be seen. The length of keel that rested upon the grass was seventy-four ells. Thorberg Skafhog was the man's name who was the master-builder of the ship; but there were many others besides,—some to fell wood, some to shape it, some to make nails, some to carry timber; and all that was used was of the best. The ship was both long and broad and high-sided, and strongly timbered.

While they were planking the ship, it happened that Thorberg had to go home to his farm upon some urgent business; and as he remained there a long time, the ship was planked up on both sides when he came back. In the evening the king went out, and Thorberg with him, to see how the vessel looked, and everybody said that never was seen so large and so beautiful a ship of war. Then the king returned to the town. Early next morning the king returns again to the ship, and Thorberg with him. The carpenters were there before them, but all were standing idle with their arms across. The king asked, "what was the matter?" They said the ship was destroyed; for somebody had gone from, stem to stern, and cut one deep notch after the other down the one side of the planking. When the king came nearer he saw it was so, and said, with an oath, "The man shall die who has thus destroyed the vessel out of envy, if he can be discovered, and I shall bestow a great reward on whoever finds him out."

"I can tell you, king," said Thorberg, "who has done this piece of work!"—

"I don't think," replies the king, "that any one is so likely to find it out as thou art."

Thorberg says, "I will tell you, king, who did it. I did it myself."

The king says, "Thou must restore it all to the same condition as before, or thy life shall pay for it."

Then Thorberg went and chipped the planks until the deep notches were all smoothed and made even with the rest; and the king and all present declared that the ship was much handsomer on the side of the hull which Thorberg, had chipped, and bade him shape the other side in the same way; and gave him great thanks for the improvement. Afterwards Thorberg was the master builder of the ship until she was entirely finished. The ship was a dragon, built after the one the king had captured in Halogaland; but this ship was far larger, and more carefully put together in all her parts. The king called this ship *Serpent the Long*, and the other *Serpent the Short*. The long *Serpent* had thirty-four benches for rowers. The head and the arched tail were both gilt, and the bulwarks were as high as in sea-going ships. This ship was the best and most costly ship ever made in Norway.

96. EARL EIRIK, THE SON OF HAKON.

Earl Eirik, the son of Earl Hakon, and his brothers, with many other valiant men their relations, had left the country after Earl Hakon's fall. Earl Eirik went eastwards to Svithjod, to Olaf, the Swedish king, and he and his people were well received. King Olaf gave the earl peace and freedom in the land, and great fiefs; so that he could support himself and his men well. Thord Kolbeinson speaks of this in the verses before given. Many people who fled from the country on account of King Olaf Trygvason came out of Norway to Earl Eirik; and the earl resolved to fit out ships and go a-cruising, in order to get property for himself and his people. First he steered to Gotland, and lay there long in summer watching for merchant vessels sailing towards the land, or for vikings.

Sometimes he landed and ravaged all round upon the sea-coasts. So it is told in the "Banda-drapa":—

Eirik, as we have lately heard,
Has waked the song of shield and sword—
Has waked the slumbering storm of shields
Upon the vikings' water-fields:
From Gotland's lonely shore has gone
Far up the land, and battles won:
And o'er the sea his name is spread,
To friends a shield, to foes a dread.

Afterwards Earl Eirik sailed south to Vindland, and at Stauren found some viking ships, and gave them battle. Eirik gained the victory, and slew the vikings. So it is told in the "Banda-drapa":—

Earl Eirik, he who stoutly wields
The battle-axe in storm of shields,
With his long ships surprised the foe
At Stauren, and their strength laid low
Many a corpse floats round the shore;
The strand with dead is studded o'er:
The raven tears their sea-bleached skins—
The land thrives well when Eirik wins.

97. EIRIK'S FORAY ON THE BALTIC COASTS.

Earl Eirik sailed back to Sweden in autumn, and staid there all winter (A.D. 997); but in the spring fitted out his war force again, and sailed up the Baltic. When he came to Valdemar's dominions he began to plunder and kill the inhabitants, and burn the dwellings everywhere as he came along, and to lay waste the country. He came to Aldegiuburg, and besieged it until he took the castle; and he killed many people, broke down and burned the castle, and then carried destruction all around far and wide in Gardarike. So it is told in the "Banda-drapa":—

The generous earl, brave and bold,
Who scatters his bright shining gold,
Eirik with fire-scattering hand,
Wasted the Russian monarch's land,—
With arrow-shower, and storm of war,
Wasted the land of Valdemar.
Aldeiga burns, and Eirik's might
Scours through all Russia by its light.

Earl Eirik was five years in all on this foray; and when he returned from Gardarike he ravaged all Adalsysla and Eysysla, and took there four viking ships from the Danes and killed every man on board. So it is told in the "Banda-drapa":—

Among the isles flies round the word,
That Eirik's blood-devouring sword
Has flashed like fire in the sound,
And wasted all the land around.
And Eirik too, the bold in fight,
Has broken down the robber-might
Of four great vikings, and has slain
All of the crew—nor spared one Dane.
In Gautland he has seized the town,
In Syssels harried up and down;
And all the people in dismay
Fled to the forests far away.
By land or sea, in field or wave,
What can withstand this earl brave?
All fly before his fiery hand—
God save the earl, and keep the land.

When Eirik had been a year in Sweden he went over to Denmark (A.D. 996) to King Svein Tjuguskeg, the Danish king, and courted his daughter Gyda. The proposal was accepted, and Earl Eirik married Gyda; and a year after (A.D. 997) they had a son, who was called Hakon. Earl Eirik was in the winter in Denmark, or sometimes in Sweden; but in summer he went a-cruising.

98. KING SVEIN'S MARRIAGE.

The Danish king, Svein Tjuguskeg, was married to Gunhild, a daughter of Burizleif, king of the Vinds. But in the times we have just been speaking of it happened that Queen Gunhild fell sick and died. Soon after King Svein married Sigrid the Haughty, a daughter of Skoglargtoste, and mother of the Swedish king Olaf; and by means of this relationship there was great friendship between the kings and Earl Eirik, Hakon's son.

99. KING BURIZLEIF'S MARRIAGE.

Burizleif, the king of the Vinds, complained to his relation Earl Sigvalde, that the agreement was broken which Sigvalde had made between King Svein and King Burizleif, by which Burizleif was to get in marriage Thyre, Harald's daughter, a sister of King Svein: but that marriage had not proceeded, for Thyre had given positive no to the proposal to marry her to an old and heathen king. "Now," said King Burizleif to Earl Sigvalde, "I must have the promise fulfilled." And he told Earl Sigvalde to go to Denmark, and bring him Thyre as his queen. Earl Sigvalde loses no time, but goes to King Svein of Denmark, explains to him the case; and brings it so far by his persuasion, that the king delivered his sister Thyre into his hands. With her went some female attendants, and her foster-father, by name Ozur Agason, a man of great power, and some other people. In the agreement between the king and the earl, it was settled that Thyre should have in property the possessions which Queen Gunhild had enjoyed in Vindland, besides other great properties as bride-gifts. Thyre wept sorely, and went very unwillingly. When the earl came to Vindland, Burizleif held his wedding with Queen Thyre, and received her in marriage; bus as long as she was among heathens she would neither eat nor drink with them, and this lasted for seven days.

100. OLAF GETS THYRE IN MARRIAGE.

It happened one night that Queen Thyre and Ozur ran away in the dark, and into the woods, and, to be short in our story, came at last to Denmark. But here Thyre did not dare to remain, knowing that if her brother King Svein heard of her, he would send her back directly to Vindland. She went on, therefore, secretly to Norway, and never stayed her journey until she fell in with King Olaf, by whom she was kindly received. Thyre related to the king her sorrows, and entreated his advice in her need, and protection in his kingdom. Thyre was a well-spoken woman, and the king had pleasure in her conversation. He saw she was a handsome woman, and it came into his mind that she would be a good match; so he turns the conversation that way, and asks if she will marry him. Now, as she saw that her situation was such that she could not help herself, and considered what a luck it was for her to marry so celebrated a man, she bade him to dispose himself of her hand and fate; and, after nearer conversation, King Olaf took Thyre in marriage. This wedding was held in harvest after the king returned from Halogaland (A.D. 999), and King Olaf and Queen Thyre remained all winter (A.D. 1000) at Nidaros.

The following spring Queen Thyre complained often to King Olaf, and wept bitterly over it, that she who had so great property in Vindland had no goods or possessions here in the country that were suitable for a queen; and sometimes she would entreat the king with fine words to get her property restored to her, and saying that King Burizleif was so great a friend of King Olaf that he would not deny King Olaf anything if they were to meet. But when King Olaf's friends heard of such speeches, they dissuaded him from any such expedition. It is related at the king one day early in spring was walking in the street, and met a man in the market with many, and, for that early season, remarkably large angelica roots. The king took a great stalk of the angelica in his hand, and went home to Queen Thyre's lodging. Thyre sat in her room weeping as the king came in. The king said, "Set here, queen, is a great angelica stalk, which I give thee." She threw it away, and said, "A greater present Harald Gormson gave to my mother; and he was not afraid to go out of the land and take his own. That was shown when he came here to Norway, and laid waste the greater part of the land, and seized on all the scat and revenues; and thou darest not go across the Danish dominions for this brother of mine, King Svein." As she spoke thus, King Olaf sprang up, and answered with loud oath, "Never did I fear thy brother King Svein; and if we meet he shall give way before me!"

101. OLAF'S LEVY FOR WAR.

Soon after the king convoked a Thing in the town, and proclaimed to all the public, that in summer would go abroad upon an expedition out of the country, and would raise both ships and men from every district; and at the same time fixed how many ships

would have from the whole Throndhjem fjord. Then he sent his message-token south and north, both along the sea-coast and up in the interior of the country, to let an army be gathered. The king ordered the Long Serpent to be put into the water, along with all his other ships both small and great. He himself steered the Long Serpent. When the crews were taken out for the ships, they were so carefully selected that no man on board the Long Serpent was older than sixty or younger than twenty years, and all were men distinguished for strength and courage. Those who were Olaf's bodyguard were in particular chosen men, both of the natives and of foreigners, and the boldest and strongest.

102. CREW ON BOARD OF THE LONG SERPENT.

Ulf the Red was the name of the man who bore King Olaf's banner, and was in the fore-castle of the Long Serpent; and with him was Kolbjorn the marshal, Thorstein Uxafot, and Vikar of Tiundaland, a brother of Arnliot Gelline. By the bulkhead next the fore-castle were Vak Raumason from Gaut River, Berse the Strong, An Skyte from Jamtaland, Thrاند the Strong from Thelamork, and his brother Uthyrmer. Besides these were, of Halogaland men, Thrاند Skjalge and Ogmund Sande, Hlodver Lange from Saltvik, and Harek Hvasse; together with these Throndhjem men—Ketil the High, Thorfin Eisle, Havard and his brothers from Orkadal. The following were in the fore-hold: Bjorn from Studla, Bork from the fjords. Thorgrim Thjodolfson from Hvin, Asbjorn and Orm, Thord from Njardarlog, Thorstein the White from Oprustadar, Arnor from More, Halstein and Hauk from the Fjord district, Eyvind Snak, Bergthor Bestil, Halkel from Fialer, Olaf Dreng, Arnfin from Sogn, Sigurd Bild, Einar from Hordaland, and Fin, and Ketil from Rogaland and Grjotgard the Brisk. The following were in the hold next the mast: Einar Tambaskelfer, who was not reckoned as fully experienced, being only eighteen years old; Thorstein Hlifarson, Thorolf, Ivar Smetta, and Orm Skogarnef. Many other valiant men were in the Serpent, although we cannot tell all their names. In every half division of the hold were eight men, and each and all chosen men; and in the fore-hold were thirty men. It was a common saying among people, that the Long Serpent's crew was as distinguished for bravery, strength, and daring, among other men, as the Long Serpent was distinguished among other ships. Thorkel Nefja, the king's brother, commanded the Short Serpent; and Thorkel Dydril and Jostein, the king's mother's brothers, had the Crane; and both these ships were well manned. King Olaf had eleven large ships from Throndhjem, besides vessels with twenty rowers' benches, smaller vessels, and provision-vessels.

103. ICELAND BAPTIZED.

When King Olaf had nearly rigged out his fleet in Nidaros, he appointed men over the Throndhjem country in all districts and communities. He also sent to Iceland Gissur the White and Hjalte Skeggjason, to proclaim Christianity there; and sent with them a priest called Thormod, along with several men in holy orders. But he retained with him, as hostages, four Icelanders whom he thought the most important; namely, Kjartan Olafson, Haldor Gudmundson, Kolbein Thorrdson, and Sverting Runolfson. Of Gissur and Hjalte's progress, it is related that they came to Iceland before the Althing, and went to the Thing; and in that Thing Christianity was introduced by law into Iceland, and in the course of the summer all the people were baptized (A.D. 1000).

104. GREENLAND BAPTIZED

The same spring King Olaf also sent Leif Eirikson (A.D. 1000) to Greenland to proclaim Christianity there, and Leif went there that summer. In the ocean he took up the crew of a ship which had been lost, and who were clinging to the wreck. He also found Vinland the Good; arrived about harvest in Greenland; and had with him for it a priest and other teachers, with whom he went to Brattahild to lodge with his father Eirik. People called him afterwards Leif the Lucky: but his father Eirik said that his luck and ill luck balanced each other; for if Leif had saved a wreck in the ocean, he had brought a hurtful person with him to Greenland, and that was

the priest.

105. RAGNVALD SENDS MESSENGERS TO OLAF.

The winter after King Olaf had baptized Halogaland, he and Queen Thyre were in Nidaros; and the summer before Queen Thyre had brought King Olaf a boy child, which was both stout and promising, and was called Harald, after its mother's father. The king and queen loved the infant exceedingly, and rejoiced in the hope that it would grow up and inherit after its father; but it lived barely a year after its birth, which both took much to heart. In that winter were many Icelanders and other clever men in King Olaf's house, as before related. His sister Ingebjorg, Trygve's daughter, King Olaf's sister, was also at the court at that time. She was beautiful in appearance, modest and frank with the people, had a steady manly judgment, and was beloved of all. She was very fond of the Icelanders who were there, but most of Kjartan Olafson, for he had been longer than the others in the king's house; and he found it always amusing to converse with her, for she had both understanding and cleverness in talk. The king was always gay and full of mirth in his intercourse with people; and often asked about the manners of the great men and chiefs in the neighbouring countries, when strangers from Denmark or Sweden came to see him. The summer before Halfred Vandredaskald had come from Gautland, where he had been with Earl Ragnvald, Ulf's son, who had lately come to the government of West Gautland. Ulf, Ragnvald's father, was a brother of Sigurd the Haughty; so that King Olaf the Swede and Earl Ragnvald were brother's and sister's children. Halfred told Olaf many things about the earl: he said he was an able chief, excellently fitted for governing, generous with money, brave and steady in friendship. Halfred said also the earl desired much the friendship of King Olaf, and had spoken of making court Ingebjorg, Trygve's daughter. The same winter came ambassadors from Gautland, and fell in with King Olaf in the north, in Nidaros, and brought the message which Halfred had spoken of,—that the earl desired to be King Olaf's entire friend, and wished to become his brother-in-law by obtaining his sister Ingebjorg in marriage. Therewith the ambassadors laid before the king sufficient tokens in proof that in reality they came from the earl on this errand. The king listened with approbation to their speech; but said that Ingebjorg must determine on his assent to the marriage. The king then talked to his sister about the matter, and asked her opinion about it. She answered to this effect,—"I have been with you for some time, and you have shown brotherly care and tender respect for me ever since you came to the country. I will agree therefore to your proposal about my marriage, provided that you do not marry me to a heathen man." The king said it should be as she wished. The king then spoke to the ambassadors; and it was settled before they departed that in summer Earl Ragnvald should meet the king in the east parts of the country, to enter into the fullest friendship with each other, and when they met they would settle about the marriage. With this reply the earl's messengers went westward, and King Olaf remained all winter in Nidaros in great splendour, and with many people about him.

106. OLAF SENDS EXPEDITION TO VINDLAND.

King Olaf proceeded in summer with his ships and men southwards along the land (and past Stad. With him were Queen Thyre and Ingebjorg, Trygve's daughter, the king's sister). Many of his friends also joined him, and other persons of consequence who had prepared themselves to travel with the king. The first man among these was his brother-in-law, Erling Skjalgson, who had with him a large ship of thirty benches of rowers, and which was in every respect well equipt. His brothers-in-law Hyrning and Thorgeir also joined him, each of whom for himself steered a large vessel; and many other powerful men besides followed him. (With all this war-force he sailed southwards along the land; but when he came south as far as Rogaland he stopped there, for Erling Skjalgson had prepared for him a splendid feast at Sole. There Earl Ragnvald, Ulf's son, from Gautland, came to meet the king, and to settle the business which had been proposed in winter in

the messages between them, namely, the marriage with Ingebjorg the king's sister. Olaf received him kindly; and when the matter came to be spoken of, the king said he would keep his word, and marry his sister Ingebjorg to him, provided he would accept the true faith, and make all his subjects he ruled over in his land be baptized; The earl agreed to this, and he and all his followers were baptized. Now was the feast enlarged that Erling had prepared, for the earl held his wedding there with Ingebjorg the king's sister. King Olaf had now married off all his sisters. The earl, with Ingebjorg, set out on his way home; and the king sent learned men with him to baptize the people in Gautland, and to teach them the right faith and morals. The king and the earl parted in the greatest friendship.)

107. OLAF'S EXPEDITION VINDLAND.

(After his sister Ingebjorg's wedding, the king made ready in all haste to leave the country with his army, which was both great and made up of fine men.) When he left the land and sailed southwards he had sixty ships of war, with which he sailed past Denmark, and in through the Sound, and on to Vindland. He appointed a meeting with King Burisleif; and when the kings met, they spoke about the property which King Olaf demanded, and the conference went off peaceably, as a good account was given of the properties which King Olaf thought himself entitled to there. He passed here much of the summer, and found many of his old friends.

108. CONSPIRACY AGAINST KING OLAF.

The Danish king, Svein Tjuguskeg, was married, as before related, to Sigrid the Haughty. Sigrid was King Olaf Trygvason's greatest enemy; the cause of which, as before said, was that King Olaf had broken off with her, and had struck her in the face. She urged King Svein much to give battle to King Olaf Trygvason; saying that he had reason enough, as Olaf had married his sister Thyre without his leave, "and that your predecessors would not have submitted to." Such persuasions Sigrid had often in her mouth; and at last she brought it so far that Svein resolved firmly on doing so. Early in spring King Svein sent messengers eastward into Svithjod, to his son-in-law Olaf, the Swedish king, and to Earl Eirik; and informed them that King Olaf of Norway was levying men for an expedition, and intended in summer to go to Vindland. To this news the Danish king added an invitation to the Swedish king and Earl Eirik to meet King Svein with an army, so that all together they might make an attack; on King Olaf Trygvason. The Swedish king and Earl Eirik were ready enough for this, and immediately assembled a great fleet and an army through all Svithjod, with which they sailed southwards to Denmark, and arrived there after King Olaf Trygvason had sailed to the eastward. Haldor the Unchristian tells of this in his lay on Earl Eirik:—

The king-subduer raised a host
Of warriors on the Swedish coast.
The brave went southwards to the fight,
Who love the sword-storm's gleaming light;
The brave, who fill the wild wolf's mouth,
Followed bold Eirik to the south;
The brave, who sport in blood—each one
With the bold earl to sea is gone.

The Swedish king and Earl Eirik sailed to meet the Danish king, and they had all, when together, an immense force.

109. EARL SIGVALDE'S TREACHEROUS PLANS.

At the same time that king Svein sent a message to Svithjod for an army, he sent Earl Sigvalde to Vindland to spy out King Olaf Trygvason's proceedings, and to bring it about by cunning devices that King Svein and King Olaf should fall in with each other. So Sigvalde sets out to go to Vindland. First, he came to Jomsborg, and then he sought out King Olaf Trygvason. There was much friendship in their conversation, and the earl got himself into great favour with the king. Astrid, the Earl's wife, King Burisleif's daughter, was a great friend of King Olaf Trygvason, particularly on account of the connection which had been between them when Olaf was married to her sister Geira. Earl Sigvalde was a prudent, ready-minded man; and as he had got a voice in

King Olaf's council, he put him off much from sailing homewards, finding various reasons for delay. Olaf's people were in the highest degree dissatisfied with this; for the men were anxious to get home, and they lay ready to sail, waiting only for a wind. At last Earl Sigvalde got a secret message from Denmark that the Swedish king's army was arrived from the east, and that Earl Eirik's also was ready; and that all these chiefs had resolved to sail eastwards to Vindland, and wait for King Olaf at an island which is called Svold. They also desired the earl to contrive matters so that they should meet King Olaf there.

110. KING OLAF'S VOYAGE FROM VINDLAND.

There came first a flying report to Vindland that the Danish king, Svein, had fitted out an army; and it was soon whispered that he intended to attack King Olaf. But Earl Sigvalde says to King Olaf, "It never can be King Svein's intention to venture with the Danish force alone, to give battle to thee with such a powerful army; but if thou hast any suspicion that evil is on foot, I will follow thee with my force (at that time it was considered a great matter to have Jomsborg vikings with an army), and I will give thee eleven well-manned ships." The king accepted this offer; and as the light breeze of wind that came was favourable, he ordered the ships to get under weigh, and the war-horns to sound the departure. The sails were hoisted and all the small vessels, sailing fastest, got out to sea before the others. The earl, who sailed nearest to the king's ship, called to those on board to tell the king to sail in his keel-track: "For I know where the water is deepest between the islands and in the sounds, and these large ships require the deepest." Then the earl sailed first with his eleven ships, and the king followed with his large ships, also eleven in number; but the whole of the rest of the fleet sailed out to sea. Now when Earl Sigvalde came sailing close under the island Svold, a skiff rowed out to inform the earl that the Danish king's army was lying in the harbour before them. Then the earl ordered the sails of his vessels to be struck, and they rowed in under the island. Haldor the Unchristian says:—

From out the south bold Trygve's son
With one-and-seventy ships came on,
To dye his sword in bloody fight,
Against the Danish foeman's might.
But the false earl the king betrayed;
And treacherous Sigvalde, it is said,
Deserted from King Olaf's fleet,
And basely fled, the Danes to meet.

It is said here that King Olaf and Earl Sigvalde had seventy sail of vessels: and one more, when they sailed from the south.

111. CONSULTATION OF THE KINGS.

The Danish King Svein, the Swedish King Olaf, and Earl Eirik, were there with all their forces. The weather being fine and clear sunshine, all these chiefs, with a great suite, went out on the isle to see the vessels sailing out at sea, and many of them crowded together; and they saw among them one large and glancing ship. The two kings said, "That is a large and very beautiful vessel: that will be the Long Serpent."

Earl Eirik replied, "That is not the Long Serpent." And he was right; for it was the ship belonging to Eindride of Gimsar.

Soon after they saw another vessel coming sailing along much larger than the first; then says King Svein, "Olaf Trygvason must be afraid, for he does not venture to sail with the figure-head of the dragon upon his ship."

Says Earl Eirik, "That is not the king's ship yet; for I know that ship by the coloured stripes of cloth in her sail. That is Erling Skialgson's. Let him sail; for it is the better for us that the ship is away from Olaf's fleet, so well equipt as she is."

Soon after they saw and knew Earl Sigvalde's ships, which turned in and laid themselves under the island. Then they saw three ships coming along under sail, and one of them very large. King Svein ordered his men to go to their ships, "for there comes the Long Serpent."

Earl Eirik says, "Many other great and stately vessels have they besides the Long Serpent. Let us wait a little."

Then said many, "Earl Eirik will not fight and avenge his father; and it is a great shame that it should be told that we lay here with so great a force, and allowed King Olaf to sail out to sea before our eyes."

But when they had spoken thus for a short time, they saw four ships coming sailing along, of which one had a large dragon-head richly gilt. Then King Svein stood up and said, "That dragon shall carry me this evening high, for I shall steer it."

Then said many, "The Long Serpent is indeed a wonderfully large and beautiful vessel, and it shows a great mind to have built such a ship."

Earl Eirik said so loud that several persons heard him, "If King Olaf had no other vessels but only that one, King Svein would never take it from him with the Danish force alone."

Thereafter all the people rushed on board their ships, took down the tents, and in all haste made ready for battle.

While the chiefs were speaking among themselves as above related, they saw three very large ships coming sailing along, and at last after them a fourth, and that was the Long Serpent. Of the large ships which had gone before, and which they had taken for the Long Serpent, the first was the Crane; the one after that was the Short Serpent; and when they really, saw the Long Serpent, all knew, and nobody had a word to say against it, that it must be Olaf Trygvason who was sailing in such a vessel; and they went to their ships to arm for the fight.

An agreement had been concluded among the chiefs, King Svein, King Olaf the Swede, and Earl Eirik, that they should divide Norway among them in three parts, in case they succeeded against Olaf Trygvason; but that he of the chiefs who should first board the Serpent should have her, and all the booty found in her, and each should have the ships he cleared for himself. Earl Eirik had a large ship of war which he used upon his viking expeditions; and there was an iron beard or comb above on both sides of the stem, and below it a thick iron plate as broad as the combs, which went down quite to the gunnel.

112. OF KING OLAF'S PEOPLE.

When Earl Sigvalde with his vessels rowed in under the island, Thorkel Dydril of the Crane, and the other ship commanders who sailed with him, saw that he turned his ships towards the isle, and thereupon let fall the sails, and rowed after him, calling out, and asking why he sailed that way. The Earl answered, that he was waiting for king Olaf, as he feared there were enemies in the water. They lay upon their oars until Thorkel Nefia came up with the Short Serpent and the three ships which followed him. When they told them the same they too struck sail, and let the ships drive, waiting for king Olaf. But when the king sailed in towards the isle, the whole enemies' fleet came rowing within them out to the Sound. When they saw this they begged the king to hold on his way, and not risk battle with so great a force. The king replied, high on the quarter-deck where he stood, "Strike the sails; never shall men of mine think of flight. I never fled from battle. Let God dispose of my life, but flight I shall never take." It was done as the king commanded. Halfred tells of it thus:—

And far and wide the saying bold
Of the brave warrior shall be told.
The king, in many a fray well tried,
To his brave champions round him cried,
'My men shall never learn from me
From the dark weapon-cloud to flee.'
Nor were the brave words spoken then
Forgotten by his faithful men.

113. OLAF'S SHIPS PREPARED FOR BATTLE.

King Olaf ordered the war-horns to sound for all his ships to close up to each other. The king's ship lay in the middle of the line, and on one side lay the Little Serpent, and on the other the Crane; and as they made fast the stems together, the Long Serpent's stem and the short Serpent's were made fast together; but when the king saw it he called out to his men, and ordered them to lay the larger ship more in advance, so that its stern should not lie so far behind in the fleet.

Then says Ulf the Red, "If the Long Serpent is to lie as much more ahead of the other ships as she is longer than them, we shall have hard work of it here on the forecastle."

The king replies, "I did not think I had a forecastle man afraid as well as red."

Says Ulf, "Defend thou the quarterdeck as I shall the forecastle."

The king had a bow in his hands, and laid an arrow on the string, and aimed at Ulf.

Ulf said, "Shoot another way, king, where it is more needful: my work is thy gain."

114. OF KING OLAF.

King Olaf stood on the Serpent's quarterdeck, high over the others. He had a gilt shield, and a helmet inlaid with gold; over his armour he had a short red coat, and was easy to be distinguished from other men. When King Olaf saw that the scattered forces of the enemy gathered themselves together under the banners of their ships, he asked, "Who is the chief of the force right opposite to us?"

He was answered, that it was King Svein with the Danish army.

The king replies, "We are not afraid of these soft Danes, for there is no bravery in them; but who are the troops on the right of the Danes?"

He was answered, that it was King Olaf with the Swedish forces.

"Better it were," says King Olaf, "for these Swedes to be sitting at home killing their sacrifices, than to be venturing under our weapons from the Long Serpent. But who owns the large ships on the larboard side of the Danes?"

"That is Earl Eirik Hakonson," say they.

The king replies, "He, methinks, has good reason for meeting us; and we may expect the sharpest conflict with these men, for they are Norsemen like ourselves."

115. THE BATTLE BEGINS.

The kings now laid out their oars, and prepared to attack (A.D. 1000). King Svein laid his ship against the Long Serpent. Outside of him Olaf the Swede laid himself, and set his ship's stern against the outermost ship of King Olaf's line; and on the other side lay Earl Eirik. Then a hard combat began. Earl Sigvalde held back with the oars on his ships, and did not join the fray. So says Skule Thorsteinson, who at that time was with Earl Eirik:—

I followed Sigvalde in my youth,
And gallant Eirik, and in truth
The' now I am grown stiff and old,
In the spear-song I once was bold.
Where arrows whistled on the shore
Of Svold fjord my shield I bore,
And stood amidst the loudest clash
When swords on shields made fearful crash.

And Halfred also sings thus:—

In truth I think the gallant king,
Midst such a foemen's gathering,
Would be the better of some score
Of his tight Thronhjelm lads, or more;
For many a chief has run away,
And left our brave king in the fray,
Two great kings' power to withstand,
And one great earl's, with his small band,
The king who dares such mighty deed
A hero for his skald would need.

116. FLIGHT OF SVEIN AND OLAF THE SWEDE.

This battle was one of the severest told of, and many were the people slain. The forecastle men of the Long Serpent, the Little Serpent, and the Crane, threw grapplings and stem chains into King Svein's ship, and used their weapons well against the people standing below them, for they cleared the decks of all the ships they could lay fast hold of; and King Svein, and all the men who escaped, fled to other vessels, and laid themselves out of bow-shot. It went with this force just as King Olaf Trygvason had foreseen. Then King Olaf the Swede laid himself in their place; but when he came near the great ships it went with him as with them, for he lost many men and some ships, and was obliged to get away.

But Earl Eirik laid his ship side by side with the outermost of King Olaf's ships, thinned it of men, cut the cables, and let it drive. Then he laid alongside of the next, and fought until he had cleared it of men also. Now all the people who were in the smaller ships began to run into the larger, and the earl cut them loose as fast as he cleared them of men. The Danes and Swedes laid themselves now out of shooting distance all around Olaf's ship; but Earl Eirik lay always close alongside of the ships, and used hid swords and battle-axes, and as fast as people fell in his vessel others, Danes and Swedes, came in their place. So says Haldor, the Unchristian:—

Sharp was the clang of shield and sword,
And shrill the song of spears on board,
And whistling arrows thickly flew
Against the Serpent's gallant crew.
And still fresh foemen, it is said,
Earl Eirik to her long side led;
Whole armies of his Danes and Swedes,
Wielding on high their blue sword-blades.

Then the fight became most severe, and many people fell. But at last it came to this, that all King Olaf Trygvason's ships were cleared of men except the Long Serpent, on board of which all who could still carry their arms were gathered. Then Earl Eirik lay with his ship by the side of the Serpent, and the fight went on with battle-axe and sword. So says Haldor:—

Hard pressed on every side by foes,
The Serpent reels beneath the blows;
Crash go the shields around the bow!
Breast-plates and breasts pierced thro' and thro'
In the sword-storm the Holm beside,
The earl's ship lay alongside
The king's Long Serpent of the sea—
Fate gave the earl the victory.

117. OF EARL EIRIK.

Earl Eirik was in the forehold of his ship, where a cover of shields had been set up. In the fight, both hewing weapons, sword, and axe, and the thrust of spears had been used; and all that could be used as weapon for casting was cast. Some used bows, some threw spears with the hand. So many weapons were cast into the Serpent, and so thick flew spears and arrows, that the shields could scarcely receive them, for on all sides the Serpent was surrounded by war-ships. Then King Olaf's men became so mad with rage, that they ran on board of the enemies ships, to get at the people with stroke of sword and kill them; but many did not lay themselves so near the Serpent, in order to escape the close encounter with battle-axe or sword; and thus the most of Olaf's men went overboard and sank under their weapons, thinking they were fighting on plain ground. So says Halfred:—

The daring lads shrink not from death;—
O'erboard they leap, and sink beneath
The Serpent's keel: all armed they leap,
And down they sink five fathoms deep.
The foe was daunted at the cheers;
The king, who still the Serpent steers,
In such a strait—beset with foes—
Wanted but some more lads like those.

118. OF EINAR TAMBARSKELVER.

Einar Tambarskelver, one of the sharpest of bowshooters, stood by the mast, and shot with his bow. Einar shot an arrow at Earl Eirik, which hit the tiller end just above the earl's head so hard that it entered the wood up to the arrow-shaft. The earl looked that way, and asked if they knew who had shot; and at the same moment another arrow flew between his hand and his side, and into the stuffing of the chief's stool, so that the barb stood far out on the other side. Then said the earl to a man called Fin,—but some say he was of Fin (Laplander) race, and was a superior archer,—"Shoot that tall man by the mast." Fin shot; and the arrow hit the middle of Einar's bow just at the moment that Einar was drawing it, and the bow was split in two parts.

"What is that," cried King Olaf, "that broke with such a noise?"

"Norway, king, from thy hands," cried Einar.

"No! not quite so much as that," says the king; "take my bow, and shoot," flinging the bow to him.

Einar took the bow, and drew it over the head of the arrow. "Too weak, too weak," said he, "for the bow of a mighty king!"

and, throwing the bow aside, he took sword and shield, and fought valiantly.

119. OLAF GIVES HIS MEN SHARP SWORDS.

The king stood on the gangways of the Long Serpent, and shot the greater part of the day; sometimes with the bow, sometimes with the spear, and always throwing two spears at once. He looked down over the ship's sides, and saw that his men struck briskly with their swords, and yet wounded but seldom. Then he called aloud, "Why do ye strike so gently that ye seldom cut?" One among the people answered, "The swords are blunt and full of notches." Then the king went down into the forehold, opened the chest under the throne, and took out many sharp swords, which he handed to his men; but as he stretched down his right hand with them, some observed that blood was running down under his steel glove, but no one knew where he was wounded.

120. THE SERPENT BOARDED.

Desperate was the defence in the Serpent, and there was the heaviest destruction of men done by the forecastle crew, and those of the forehold, for in both places the men were chosen men, and the ship was highest, but in the middle of the ship the people were thinned. Now when Earl Eirik saw there were but few people remaining beside the ship's mast, he determined to board; and he entered the Serpent with four others. Then came Hyrning, the king's brother-in-law, and some others against him, and there was the most severe combat; and at last the earl was forced to leap back on board his own ship again, and some who had accompanied him were killed, and others wounded. Thord Kolbeinson alludes to this:—

On Odin's deck, all wet with blood,
The helm-adorned hero stood;
And gallant Hyrning honour gained,
Clearing all round with sword deep stained.
The high mountain peaks shall fall,
Ere men forget this to recall.

Now the fight became hot indeed, and many men fell on board the Serpent; and the men on board of her began to be thinned off, and the defence to be weaker. The earl resolved to board the Serpent again, and again he met with a warm reception. When the forecastle men of the Serpent saw what he was doing, they went aft and made a desperate fight; but so many men of the Serpent had fallen, that the ship's sides were in many places quite bare of defenders; and the earl's men poured in all around into the vessel, and all the men who were still able to defend the ship crowded aft to the king, and arrayed themselves for his defence. So says Haldor the Unchristian:—

Eirik cheers on his men,—
'On to the charge again!'
The gallant few
Of Olaf's crew
Must refuge take
On the quarter-deck.
Around the king
They stand in ring;
Their shields enclose
The king from foes,
And the few who still remain
Fight madly, but in vain.
Eirik cheers on his men—
'On to the charge again!'

121. THE SERPENT'S DECKS CLEARED.

Kolbjorn the marshal, who had on clothes and arms like the kings, and was a remarkably stout and handsome man, went up to king on the quarter-deck. The battle was still going on fiercely even in the forehold. But as many of the earl's men had now got into the Serpent as could find room, and his ships lay all round her, and few were the people left in the Serpent for defence against so great a force; and in a short time most of the Serpent's men fell, brave and stout though they were. King Olaf and Kolbjorn the marshal both sprang overboard, each on his own side of the ship; but the earl's men had laid out boats around the Serpent, and killed those who leaped overboard. Now when the king had sprang overboard, they

tried to seize him with their hands, and bring him to Earl Eirik; but King Olaf threw his shield over his head, and sank beneath the waters. Kolbjorn held his shield behind him to protect himself from the spears cast at him from the ships which lay round the Serpent, and he fell so upon his shield that it came under him, so that he could not sink so quickly. He was thus taken and brought into a boat, and they supposed he was the king. He was brought before the earl; and when the earl saw it was Kolbjorn, and not the king, he gave him his life. At the same moment all of King Olaf's men who were in life sprang overboard from the Serpent; and Thorkel Nefia, the king's brother, was the last of all the men who sprang overboard. It is thus told concerning the king by Halfred:—

The Serpent and the Crane
Lay wrecks upon the main.
On his sword he cast a glance,—
With it he saw no chance.
To his marshal, who of yore
Many a war-chance had come o'er,
He spoke a word—then drew in breath,
And sprang to his deep-sea death.

122. REPORT AMONG THE PEOPLE.

Earl Sigvalde, as before related, came from Vindland, in company with King Olaf, with ten ships; but the eleventh ship was manned with the men of Astrid, the king's daughter, the wife of Earl Sigvalde. Now when King Olaf sprang overboard, the whole army raised a shout of victory; and then Earl Sigvalde and his men put their oars in the water and rowed towards the battle. Haldor the Unchristian tells of it thus:—

Then first the Vindland vessels came
Into the fight with little fame;
The fight still lingered on the wave,
Tho' hope was gone with Olaf brave.
War, like a full-fed ravenous beast,
Still oped her grim jaws for the feast.
The few who stood now quickly fled,
When the shout told—'Olaf is dead!'

But the Vindland cutter, in which Astrid's men were, rowed back to Vindland; and the report went immediately abroad and was told by many, that King Olaf had cast off his coat-of-mail under water, and had swum, diving under the longships, until he came to the Vindland cutter, and that Astrid's men had conveyed him to Vindland: and many tales have been made since about the adventures of Olaf the king. Halfred speaks thus about it:—

Does Olaf live? or is he dead?
Has he the hungry ravens fed?
I scarcely know what I should say,
For many tell the tale each way.
This I can say, nor fear to lie,
That he was wounded grievously—
So wounded in this bloody strife,
He scarce could come away with life.

But however this may have been, King Olaf Trygvason never came back again to his kingdom of Norway. Halfred Vandraskald speaks also thus about it:

The witness who reports this thing
Of Trygvason, our gallant king,
Once served the king, and truth should tell,
For Olaf hated lies like hell.
If Olaf 'scaped from this sword-thing,
Worse fate, I fear, befel our king
Than people guess, or e'er can know,
For he was hemm'd in by the foe.
From the far east some news is rife
Of king sore wounded saving life;
His death, too sure, leaves me no care
For cobweb rumours in the air.
It never was the will of fate
That Olaf from such perilous strait
Should 'scape with life! this truth may grieve—
'What people wish they soon believe.'

123. OF EARL EIRIK, THE SON OF HAKON.

By this victory Earl Eirik Hakonson became owner of the Long Serpent, and made a great booty besides; and he steered the Serpent from the battle. So says Haldor:—

Olaf, with glittering helmet crowned,
Had steered the Serpent through the Sound;

And people dressed their boats, and cheered
 As Olaf's fleet in splendour steered.
 But the descendent of great Heming,
 Whose race tells many a gallant sea-king,
 His blue sword in red life-blood stained,
 And bravely Olaf's long ship gained.

Svein, a son of Earl Hakon, and Earl Eirik's brother, was engaged at this time to marry Holmfrid, a daughter of King Olaf the Swedish king. Now when Svein the Danish king, Olaf the Swedish king, and Earl Eirik divided the kingdom of Norway between them, King Olaf got four districts in the Thronhjelm country, and also the districts of More and Raumsdal; and in the east part of the land he got Ranrike, from the Gaut river to Svinasund. Olaf gave these dominions into Earl Svein's hands, on the same conditions as the sub kings or earls had held them formerly from the upper-king of the country. Earl Eirik got four districts in the Thronhjelm country, and Halogaland, Naumudal, the Fjord districts, Sogn, Hordaland, Rogaland, and North Agder, all the way to the Naze. So says Thord Kolbeinson:—

All chiefs within our land
 On Eirik's side now stand:
 Erling alone, I know
 Remains Earl Eirik's foe.
 All praise our generous earl,—
 He gives, and is no churl:
 All men are well content
 Fate such a chief has sent.
 From Veiga to Agder they,
 Well pleased, the earl obey;
 And all will by him stand,
 To guard the Norsemen's land.
 And now the news is spread
 That mighty Svein is dead,
 And luck is gone from those
 Who were the Norsemen's foes.

The Danish king Svein retained Viken as he had held it before, but he gave Raumarike and Hedemark to Earl Eirik. Svein Hakonson got the title of earl from Olaf the Swedish king. Svein was one of the handsomest men ever seen. The earls Eirik and Svein both allowed themselves to be baptized, and took up the true faith; but as long as they ruled in Norway they allowed every one to do as he pleased in holding by his Christianity. But, on the other hand, they held fast by the old laws, and all the old rights and customs of the land, and were excellent men and good rulers. Earl Eirik had most to say of the two brothers in all matters of government.

SAGA OF OLAF HARALDSON.

1. OF SAINT OLAF'S BRINGING UP.

Olaf, Harald Grenske's son, was brought up by his stepfather Sigurd Syr and his mother Asta. Hrane the Far-travelled lived in the house of Asta, and fostered this Olaf Haraldson. Olaf came early to manhood, was handsome in countenance, middle-sized in growth, and was even when very young of good understanding and ready speech. Sigurd his stepfather was a careful householder, who kept his people closely to their work, and often went about himself to inspect his corn-rigs and meadowland, the cattle, and also the smith-work, or whatsoever his people had on hand to do.

2. OF OLAF AND KING SIGURD SYR.

It happened one day that King Sigurd wanted to ride from home, but there was nobody about the house; so he told his stepson Olaf to saddle his horse. Olaf went to the goats' pen, took out the he-goat that was the largest, led him forth, and put the king's saddle on him, and then went in and told King Sigurd he had saddled his riding horse. Now when King Sigurd came out and saw what Olaf had done, he said "It is easy to see that thou wilt little regard my orders; and thy mother will think it right that I order thee to do nothing that is against thy own inclination. I see well enough that we are of different dispositions, and that thou art far more proud than I am." Olaf answered little, but went his way laughing.

3. OF RING OLAF'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

When Olaf Haraldson grew up he was not tall, but middle-sized in height, although very thick, and of good strength. He had light

brown hair, and a broad face, which was white and red. He had particularly fine eyes, which were beautiful and piercing, so that one was afraid to look him in the face when he was angry. Olaf was very expert in all bodily exercises, understood well to handle his bow, and was distinguished particularly in throwing his spear by hand: he was a great swimmer, and very handy, and very exact and knowing in all kinds of smithwork, whether he himself or others made the thing. He was distinct and acute in conversation, and was soon perfect in understanding and strength. He was beloved by his friends and acquaintances, eager in his amusements, and one who always liked to be the first, as it was suitable he should be from his birth and dignity. He was called Olaf the Great.

4. KING OLAF'S WAR EXPEDITION.

Olaf Haraldson was twelve years old when he, for the first time, went on board a ship of war (A.D. 1007). His mother Asta got Hrane, who was called the foster-father of kings, to command a ship of war and take Olaf under his charge; for Hrane had often been on war expeditions. When Olaf in this way got a ship and men, the crew gave him the title of king; for it was the custom that those commanders of troops who were of kingly descent, on going out upon a viking cruise, received the title of king immediately although they had no land or kingdom. Hrane sat at the helm; and some say that Olaf himself was but a common rower, although he was king of the men-at-arms. They steered east along the land, and came first to Denmark. So says Ottar Svarte, in his lay which he made about King Olaf:—

Young was the king when from his home
 He first began in ships to roam,
 His ocean-steed to ride
 To Denmark o'er the tide.
 Well exercised art thou in truth—
 In manhood's earnest work, brave youth!
 Out from the distant north
 Mighty hast thou come forth.

Towards autumn he sailed eastward to the Swedish dominions, and there harried and burnt all the country round; for he thought he had good cause of hostility against the Swedes, as they killed his father Harald. Ottar Svarte says distinctly that he came from the east, out by way of Denmark:—

Thy ship from shore to shore,
 With many a well-plied car,
 Across the Baltic foam is dancing.—
 Shields, and spears, and helms glancing!
 Hoist high the swelling sail
 To catch the freshening gale!
 There's food for the raven-flight
 Where thy sail-winged ship shall light;
 Thy landing-tread
 The people dread;
 And the wolf howls for a feast
 On the shore-side in the east.

5. OLAF'S FIRST BATTLE.

The same autumn Olaf had his first battle at Sotasker, which lies in the Swedish skerry circle. He fought there with some vikings, whose leader was Sote. Olaf had much fewer men, but his ships were larger, and he had his ships between some blind rocks, which made it difficult for the vikings to get alongside; and Olaf's men threw grappling irons into the ships which came nearest, drew them up to their own vessels, and cleared them of men. The vikings took to flight after losing many men. Sigvat the skald tells of this fight in the lay in which he reckons up King Olaf's battles:—

They launch his ship where waves are foaming—
 To the sea shore
 Both mast and oar,
 And sent his o'er the seas a-roaming.
 Where did the sea-king first draw blood?
 In the battle shock
 At Sote's rock;
 The wolves howl over their fresh food.

6. FORAY IN SVITHJOD.

King Olaf steered thereafter eastwards to Svithjod, and into the Lag (the Maelar lake), and ravaged the land on both sides. He sailed all the way up to Sigtuna, and laid his ships close to the old Sigtuna. The Swedes say the stone-heaps are still to be seen

which Olaf had laid under the ends of the gangways from the shore to the ships. When autumn was advanced, Olaf Haraldson heard that Olaf the Swedish king was assembling an army, and also that he had laid iron chains across Stoksund (the channel between the Maelar lake and the sea), and had laid troops there; for the Swedish king thought that Olaf Haraldson would be kept in there till frost came, and he thought little of Olaf's force knowing he had but few people. Now when King Olaf Haraldson came to Stoksund he could not get through, as there was a castle west of the sound, and men-at-arms lay on the south; and he heard that the Swedish king was come there with a great army and many ships. He therefore dug a canal across the flat land Agnafit out to the sea. Over all Svithjod all the running waters fall into the Maelar lake; but the only outlet of it to the sea is so small that many rivers are wider, and when much rain or snow falls the water rushes in a great cataract out by Stoksund, and the lake rises high and floods the land. It fell heavy rain just at this time; and as the canal was dug out to the sea, the water and stream rushed into it. Then Olaf had all the rudders unshipped and hoisted all sail aloft. It was blowing a strong breeze astern, and they steered with their oars, and the ships came in a rush over all the shallows, and got into the sea without any damage. Now went the Swedes to their king, Olaf, and told him that Olaf the Great had slipped out to sea; on which the king was enraged against those who should have watched that Olaf did not get away. This passage has since been called King's Sound; but large vessels cannot pass through it, unless the waters are very high. Some relate that the Swedes were aware that Olaf had cut across the tongue of land, and that the water was falling out that way; and they flocked to it with the intention to hinder Olaf from getting away, but the water undermined the banks on each side so that they fell in with the people, and many were drowned: but the Swedes contradict this as a false report, and deny the loss of people. The king sailed to Gotland in harvest, and prepared to plunder; but the Gotlanders assembled, and sent men to the king, offering him a scat. The king found this would suit him, and he received the scat, and remained there all winter. So says Ottar Svarte:—

Thou seaman-prince! thy men are paid:
The scat on Gotlanders is laid;
Young man or old
To our seamen bold
Must pay, to save his head:
The Yngling princes fled,
Eysvssel people bled;
Who can't defend the wealth they have
Must die, or share with the rover brave.

7. THE SECOND BATTLE.

It is related here that King Olaf, when spring set in, sailed east to Eysvssel, and landed and plundered; the Eysvssel men came down to the strand and gave him battle. King Olaf gained the victory, pursued those who fled, and laid waste the land with fire and sword. It is told that when King Olaf first came to Eysvssel they offered him scat, and when the scat was to be brought down to the strand the king came to meet it with an armed force, and that was not what the bondes there expected; for they had brought no scat, but only their weapons with which they fought against the king, as before related. So says Sigvat the skald:—

With much deceit and bustle
To the heath of Eysvssel
The bondes brought the king,
To get scat at their weapon-thing.
But Olaf was too wise
To be taken by surprise;
Their legs scarce bore them off
O'er the common test enough.

8. THE THIRD BATTLE.

After this they sailed to Finland and plundered there, and went up the country. All the people fled to the forest, and they had emptied their houses of all household goods. The king went far up the country, and through some woods, and came to some dwellings in a valley called Herdaler,—where, however, they made but small booty, and saw no people; and as it was getting late in the day, the king turned back to his ships. Now when they came into the

woods again people rushed upon them from all quarters, and made a severe attack. The king told his men to cover themselves with their shields, but before they got out of the woods he lost many people, and many were wounded; but at last, late in the evening, he got to the ships. The Finlanders conjured up in the night, by their witchcraft, a dreadful storm and bad weather on the sea; but the king ordered the anchors to be weighed and sail hoisted, and beat off all night to the outside of the land. The king's luck prevailed more than the Finlanders' witchcraft; for he had the luck to beat round the Balagard's side in the night, and so got out to sea. But the Finnish army proceeded on land, making the same progress as the king made with his ships. So says Sigvat:—

The third fight was at Herdaler, where
The men of Finland met in war
The hero of the royal race,
With ringing sword-blades face to face.
Off Balagard's shore the waves
Ran hollow; but the sea-king saves
His hard-pressed ship, and gains the lee
Of the east coast through the wild sea.

9. THE FOURTH BATTLE IN SUDERVIK.

King Olaf sailed from thence to Denmark, where he met Thorkel the Tall, brother of Earl Sigvalde, and went into partnership with him; for he was just ready to set out on a cruise. They sailed southwards to the Jutland coast, to a place called Sudervik, where they overcame many viking ships. The vikings, who usually have many people to command, give themselves the title of kings, although they have no lands to rule over. King Olaf went into battle with them, and it was severe; but King Olaf gained the victory, and a great booty. So says Sigvat:—

Hark! hark! The war-shout
Through Sudervik rings,
And the vikings bring out
To fight the two kings.
Great honour, I'm told,
Won these vikings so bold:
But their bold fight was vain,
For the two brave kings gain.

10. THE FIFTH BATTLE IN FRIESLAND.

King Olaf sailed from thence south to Friesland, and lay under the strand of Kinlima in dreadful weather. The king landed with his men; but the people of the country rode down to the strand against them, and he fought them. So says Sigvat:—

Under Kinlima's cliff,
This battle is the fifth.
The brave sea-rovers stand
All on the glittering sand;
And down the horsemen ride
To the edge of the rippling tide:
But Olaf taught the peasant band
To know the weight of a viking's hand.

11. DEATH OF KING SVEIN FORKED BEARD.

The king sailed from thence westward to England. It was then the case that the Danish king, Svein Forked Beard, was at that time in England with a Danish army, and had been fixed there for some time, and had seized upon King Ethelred's kingdom. The Danes had spread themselves so widely over England, that it was come so far that King Ethelred had departed from the country, and had gone south to Valland. The same autumn that King Olaf came to England, it happened that King Svein died suddenly in the night in his bed; and it is said by Englishmen that Edmund the Saint killed him, in the same way that the holy Mercurius had killed the apostate Julian. When Ethelred, the king of the English, heard this in Flanders, he returned directly to England; and no sooner was he come back, than he sent an invitation to all the men who would enter into his pay, to join him in recovering the country. Then many people flocked to him; and among others, came King Olaf with a great troop of Northmen to his aid. They steered first to London, and sailed into the Thames with their fleet; but the Danes had a castle within. On the other side of the river is a great trading place, which is called Sudvirke. There the Danes had raised a great work, dug large ditches, and within had built a bulwark of stone,

timber, and turf, where they had stationed a strong army. King Ethelred ordered a great assault; but the Danes defended themselves bravely, and King Ethelred could make nothing of it. Between the castle and Southwark (Sudvirke) there was a bridge, so broad that two wagons could pass each other upon it. On the bridge were raised barricades, both towers and wooden parapets, in the direction of the river, which were nearly breast high; and under the bridge were piles driven into the bottom of the river. Now when the attack was made the troops stood on the bridge everywhere, and defended themselves. King Ethelred was very anxious to get possession of the bridge, and he called together all the chiefs to consult how they should get the bridge broken down. Then said King Olaf he would attempt to lay his fleet alongside of it, if the other ships would do the same. It was then determined in this council that they should lay their war forces under the bridge; and each made himself ready with ships and men.

12. THE SIXTH BATTLE.

King Olaf ordered great platforms of floating wood to be tied together with hazel bands, and for this he took down old houses; and with these, as a roof, he covered over his ships so widely, that it reached over the ships' sides. Under this screen he set pillars so high and stout, that there both was room for swinging their swords, and the roofs were strong enough to withstand the stones cast down upon them. Now when the fleet and men were ready, they rode up along the river; but when they came near the bridge, there were cast down upon them so many stones and missile weapons, such as arrows and spears, that neither helmet nor shield could hold out against it; and the ships themselves were so greatly damaged, that many retreated out of it. But King Olaf, and the Northmen's fleet with him, rowed quite up under the bridge, laid their cables around the piles which supported it, and then rowed off with all the ships as hard as they could down the stream. The piles were thus shaken in the bottom, and were loosened under the bridge. Now as the armed troops stood thick of men upon the bridge, and there were likewise many heaps of stones and other weapons upon it, and the piles under it being loosened and broken, the bridge gave way; and a great part of the men upon it fell into the river, and all the others fled, some into the castle, some into Southwark. Thereafter Southwark was stormed and taken. Now when the people in the castle saw that the river Thames was mastered, and that they could not hinder the passage of ships up into the country, they became afraid, surrendered the tower, and took Ethelred to be their king. So says Ottar Svarte:—

London Bridge is broken down.—
Gold is won, and bright renown.
Shields resounding,
War-horns sounding,
Hild is shouting in the din!
Arrows singing,
Mail-coats ringing—
Odin makes our Olaf win!

And he also composed these:—

King Ethelred has found a friend:
Brave Olaf will his throne defend—
In bloody fight
Maintain his right,
Win back his land
With blood-red hand,
And Edmund's son upon his throne replace—
Edmund, the star of every royal race!

Sigvat also relates as follows:—

At London Bridge stout Olaf gave
Odin's law to his war-men brave—
'To win or die!'
And their foemen fly.
Some by the dyke-side refuge gain—
Some in their tents on Southwark plain!
The sixth attack
Brought victory back.

13. THE SEVENTH BATTLE.

King Olaf passed all the winter with King Ethelred, and had a great battle at Hringmara Heath in Ulfkæl's land, the domain which Ulfkæl Snilling at that time held; and here again the king was victorious. So says Sigvat the skald:—

To Ulfkæl's land came Olaf bold,
A seventh sword-thing he would hold.
The race of Ella filled the plain—
Few of them slept at home again!
Hringmara heath
Was a bed of death:
Harfager's heir
Dealt slaughter there.

And Ottar sings of this battle thus:—

From Hringmara field
The chime of war,
Sword striking shield,
Rings from afar.
The living fly;
The dead piled high
The moor enrich;
Red runs the ditch.

The country far around was then brought in subjection to King Ethelred: but the Thingmen and the Danes held many castles, besides a great part of the country.

14. EIGHTH AND NINTH BATTLES OF OLAF.

King Olaf was commander of all the forces when they went against Canterbury; and they fought there until they took the town, killing many people and burning the castle. So says Ottar Svarte:—

All in the grey of morn
Broad Canterbury's forced.
Black smoke from house-roofs borne
Hides fire that does its worst;
And many a man laid low
By the battle-axe's blow,
Waked by the Norsemen's cries,
Scarce had time to rub his eyes.

Sigvat reckons this King Olaf's eighth battle:—

Of this eighth battle I can tell
How it was fought, and what befell,
The castle tower
With all his power
He could not take,
Nor would forsake.
The Perthmen fought,
Nor quarter sought;
By death or flight
They left the fight.
Olaf could not this earl stout
From Canterbury quite drive out.

At this time King Olaf was entrusted with the whole land defence of England, and he sailed round the land with his ships of War. He laid his ships at land at Nyjamoda, where the troops of the Thingmen were, and gave them battle and gained the victory. So says Sigvat the skald:—

The youthful king stained red the hair
Of Angeln men, and dyed his spear
At Newport in their hearts' dark blood:
And where the Danes the thickest stood—
Where the shrill storm round Olaf's head
Of spear and arrow thickest fled.
There thickest lay the Thingmen dead!
Nine battles now of Olaf bold,
Battle by battle, I have told.

King Olaf then scoured all over the country, taking scat of the people and plundering where it was refused. So says Ottar:—

The English race could not resist thee,
With money thou madest them assist thee;
Unsparingly thou madest them pay
A scat to thee in every way;
Money, if money could be got—
Goods, cattle, household gear, if not.
Thy gathered spoil, borne to the strand,
Was the best wealth of English land.

Olaf remained here for three years (A.D. 1010-1012).

15. THE TENTH BATTLE.

The third year King Ethelred died, and his sons Edmund and Edward took the government (A.D. 1012). Then Olaf sailed southwards out to sea, and had a battle at Hringfjord, and took a castle situated at Holar, where vikings resorted, and burnt the castle. So says Sigvat the skald:—

Of the tenth battle now I tell,
Where it was fought, and what befell.
Up on the hill in Hringstjorð fair
A robber nest hung in the air:
The people followed our brave chief,
And razed the tower of the viking thief.
Such rock and tower, such roosting-place,
Was ne'er since held by the roving race.

16. ELEVENTH, TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH BATTLES.

Then King Olaf proceeded westwards to Grislopollar, and fought there with vikings at Williamsby; and there also King Olaf gained the victory. So says Sigvat:—

The eleventh battle now I tell,
Where it was fought, and what befell.
At Grislopul our young fir's name
O'ertopped the forest trees in fame:
Brave Olaf's name—nought else was heard
But Olaf's name, and arm, and sword.
Of three great earls, I have heard say,
His sword crushed helm and head that day.

Next he fought westward on Fetlafjord, as Sigvat tells:—

The twelfth fight was at Fetlafjord,
Where Olaf's honour-seeking sword
Gave the wild wolf's devouring teeth
A feast of warriors doomed to death.

From thence King Olaf sailed southwards to Seljupollar, where he had a battle. He took there a castle called Gunvaldsborg, which was very large and old. He also made prisoner the earl who ruled over the castle and who was called Geirfin. After a conference with the men of the castle, he laid a scat upon the town and earl, as ransom, of twelve thousand gold shillings: which was also paid by those on whom it was imposed. So says Sigvat:—

The thirteenth battle now I tell,
Where it was fought, and what befell.
In Seljupol was fought the fray,
And many did not survive the day.
The king went early to the shore,
To Gunvaldsborg's old castle-tower;
And a rich earl was taken there,
Whose name was Geridin, I am sure.

17. FOURTEENTH BATTLE AND OLAF'S DREAM.

Thereafter King Olaf steered with his fleet westward to Karlsar, and tarried there and had a fight. And while King Olaf was lying in Karlsar river waiting a wind, and intending to sail up to Norvasund, and then on to the land of Jerusalem, he dreamt a remarkable dream—that there came to him a great and important man, but of a terrible appearance withal, who spoke to him, and told him to give up his purpose of proceeding to that land. "Return back to thy udal, for thou shalt be king over Norway for ever." He interpreted this dream to mean that he should be king over the country, and his posterity after him for a long time.

18. FIFTEENTH BATTLE.

After this appearance to him he turned about, and came to Poitou, where he plundered and burnt a merchant town called Varrande. Of this Ottar speaks:—

Our young king, blythe and gay,
Is foremost in the fray:
Poitou he plunders, Tuskland burns,—
He fights and wins where'er he turns.

And also Sigvat says:—

The Norsemen's king is on his cruise,
His blue steel staining,
Rich booty gaining,
And all men trembling at the news.
The Norsemen's kings up on the Loire:
Rich Partheney
In ashes lay;
Far inland reached the Norsemen's spear.

19. OF THE EARLS OF ROUEN.

King Olaf had been two summers and one winter in the west in Valland on this cruise; and thirteen years had now passed since the fall of King Olaf Trygvason. During this time earls had ruled over Norway; first Hakon's sons Eirik and Svein, and afterwards Eirik's sons Hakon and Svein. Hakon was a sister's son of King Canute, the son of Svein. During this time there were two earls in Valland, William and Robert; their father was Richard earl of Rouen. They ruled over Normandy. Their sister was Queen Emma, whom the English king Ethelred had married; and their sons were Edmund, Edward the Good, Edwy, and Edgar. Richard the earl of Rouen was a son of Richard the son of William Long Spear, who was the son of Rolf Ganger, the earl who first conquered Normandy; and he again was a son of Ragnvald the Mighty, earl of More, as before related. From Rolf Ganger are descended the earls of Rouen, who have long reckoned themselves of kin to the chiefs in Norway, and hold them in such respect that they always were the greatest friends of the Northmen; and every Northman found a friendly country in Normandy, if he required it. To Normandy King Olaf came in autumn (A.D. 1013), and remained all winter (A.D. 1014) in the river Seine in good peace and quiet.

20. OF EINAR TAMBASKELFER.

After Olaf Trygvason's fall, Earl Eirik gave peace to Einar Tambaskelfer, the son of Eindride Styrkarson; and Einar went north with the earl to Norway. It is said that Einar was the strongest man and the best archer that ever was in Norway. His shooting was sharp beyond all others; for with a blunt arrow he shot through a raw, soft ox-hide, hanging over a beam. He was better than any man at running on snow-shoes, was a great man at all exercises, was of high family, and rich. The earls Eirik and Svein married their sister Bergliot to Einar. Their son was named Eindride. The earls gave Einar great fiefs in Orkadal, so that he was one of the most powerful and able men in the Throndhjem country, and was also a great friend of the earls, and a great support and aid to them.

21. OF ERLING SKIALGSON.

When Olaf Trygvason ruled over Norway, he gave his brother-in-law Erling half of the land scat, and royal revenues between the Naze and Sogn. His other sister he married to the Earl Ragnvald Ulfson, who long ruled over West Gautland. Ragnvald's father, Ulf, was a brother of Sigrid the Haughty, the mother of Olaf the Swedish king. Earl Eirik was ill pleased that Erling Skialgson had so large a dominion, and he took to himself all the king's estates, which King Olaf had given to Erling. But Erling levied, as before, all the land scat in Rogaland; and thus the inhabitants had often to pay him the land scat, otherwise he laid waste their land. The earl made little of the business, for no bailiff of his could live there, and the earl could only come there in guest-quarters, when he had a great many people with him. So says Sigvat:—

Olaf the king
Thought the bonde Erling
A man who would grace
His own royal race.
One sister the king
Gave the bonde Erling;
And one to an earl,
And she saved him in peril.

Earl Eirik did not venture to fight with Erling, because he had very powerful and very many friends, and was himself rich and popular, and kept always as many retainers about him as if he held a king's court. Erling was often out in summer on plundering expeditions, and procured for himself means of living; for he continued his usual way of high and splendid living, although now he had fewer and less convenient fiefs than in the time of his brother-in-law King Olaf Trygvason. Erling was one of the handsomest, largest, and strongest men; a better warrior than any other; and in all exercises he was like King Olaf himself. He was, besides, a man of understanding, jealous in everything he undertook, and a deadly man at arms. Sigvat talks thus of him:—

No earl or baron, young or old,
Match with this bonde brave can hold.
Mild was brave Erling, all men say,

When not engaged in bloody fray:
His courage he kept hid until
The fight began, then foremost still
Erling was seen in war's wild game,
And famous still is Erling's name.

It was a common saying among the people, that Erling had been the most valiant who ever held lands under a king in Norway. Erlings and Astrid's children were these—Aslak, Skialg, Sigurd, Lodin, Thorer, and Ragnhild, who was married to Thorberg Arnason. Erling had always with him ninety free-born men or more, and both winter and summer it was the custom in his house to drink at the mid-day meal according to a measure, but at the night meal there was no measure in drinking. When the earl was in the neighbourhood he had 200 men or more. He never went to sea with less than a fully-manned ship of twenty benches of rowers. Erling had also a ship of thirty-two benches of rowers, which was besides, very large for that size, and which he used in viking cruises, or on an expedition; and in it there were 200 men at the very least.

22. OF THE HERSE ERLING SKIALGSON.

Erling had always at home on his farm thirty slaves, besides other serving-people. He gave his slaves a certain day's work; but after it he gave them leisure, and leave that each should work in the twilight and at night for himself, and as he pleased. He gave them arable land to sow corn in, and let them apply their crops to their own use. He laid upon each a certain quantity of labour to work themselves free by doing it; and there were many who bought their freedom in this way in one year, or in the second year, and all who had any luck could make themselves free within three years. With this money he bought other slaves: and to some of his freed people he showed how to work in the herring-fishery, to others he showed some useful handicraft; and some cleared his outfields and set up houses. He helped all to prosperity.

23. OF EARL EIRIK.

When Earl Eirik had ruled over Norway for twelve years, there came a message to him from his brother-in-law King Canute, the Danish king, that he should go with him on an expedition westward to England; for Eirik was very celebrated for his campaigns, as he had gained the victory in the two hardest engagements which had ever been fought in the north countries. The one was that in which the Earls Hakon and Eirik fought with the Jomsborg vikings; the other that in which Earl Eirik fought with King Olaf Trygvason. Thord Kolbeinson speaks of this:—

A song of praise
Again I raise.
To the earl bold
The word is told,
That Knut the Brave
His aid would crave;
The earl, I knew,
To friend stands true.

The earl would not sleep upon the message of the king, but sailed immediately out of the country, leaving behind his son Earl Hakon to take care of Norway; and, as he was but seventeen years of age, Einar Tambaskelfer was to be at his hand to rule the country for him.

Eirik met King Canute in England, and was with him when he took the castle of London. Earl Eirik had a battle also to the westward of the castle of London, and killed Ulfkel Snilling. So says Thord Kolbeinson:—

West of London town we passed,
And our ocean-steeds made fast,
And a bloody fight begin,
England's lands to lose or win.
Blue sword and shining spear
Laid Ulfkel's dead corpse there,
Our Thingmen hear the war-shower sounding
Our grey arrows from their shields rebounding.

Earl Eirik was a winter in England, and had many battles there. The following autumn he intended to make a pilgrimage to Rome, but he died in England of a bloody flux.

24. THE MURDER OF EDMUND.

King Canute came to England the summer that King Ethelred died, and had many battles with Ethelred's sons, in which the victory was sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other. Then King Canute took Queen Emma in marriage; and their children were Harald, Hardacanute, and Gunhild. King Canute then made an agreement with King Edmund, that each of them should have a half of England. In the same month Henry Strion murdered King Edmund. King Canute then drove all Ethelred's sons out of England. So says Sigvat:—

Now all the sons of Ethelred
Were either fallen, or had fled:
Some slain by Canute,—some they say,
To save their lives had run away.

25. OLAF AND ETHELRED'S SONS.

King Ethelred's sons came to Rouen in Valland from England, to their mother's brother, the same summer that King Olaf Haraldson came from the west from his viking cruise, and they were all during the winter in Normandy together. They made an agreement with each other that King Olaf should have Northumberland, if they could succeed in taking England from the Danes. Therefore about harvest, Olaf sent his foster-father Hrane to England to collect men-at-arms; and Ethelred's sons sent tokens to their friends and relations with him. King Olaf, besides, gave him much money with him to attract people to them. Hrane was all winter in England, and got promises from many powerful men of fidelity, as the people of the country would rather have native kings over them; but the Danish power had become so great in England, that all the people were brought under their dominion.

26. BATTLE OF KING OLAF.

In spring (A.D. 1014) King Olaf and King Ethelred's sons set out together to the west, and came to a place in England called Jungufurda, where they landed with their army and moved forward against the castle. Many men were there who had promised them their aid. They took the castle; and killed many people. Now when King Canute's men heard of this they assembled an army, and were soon in such force that Ethelred's sons could not stand against it; and they saw no other way left but to return to Rouen. Then King Olaf separated from them, and would not go back to Valland, but sailed northwards along England, all the way to Northumberland, where he put into a haven at a place called Valde; and in a battle there with the townspeople and merchants he gained the victory, and a great booty.

27. OLAF'S EXPEDITION TO NORWAY.

King Olaf left his long-ships there behind, but made ready two ships of burden; and had with him 220 men in them, well-armed, and chosen people. He sailed out to sea northwards in harvest, but encountered a tremendous storm and they were in danger of being lost; but as they had a chosen crew, and the king's luck with them, all went on well. So says Ottar:—

Olaf, great stem of kings, is brave—
Bold in the fight, bold on the wave.
No thought of fear
Thy heart comes near.
Undaunted, 'midst the roaring flood,
Firm at his post each shipman stood;
And thy two ships stout
The gale stood out.

And further he says:—

Thou abie chief! with thy fearless crew
Thou meetest, with skill and courage true,
The wild sea's wrath
On thy ocean path.
Though waves mast-high were breaking round.
Thou findest the middle of Norway's ground,
With helm in hand
On Saela's strand.

It is related here that King Olaf came from the sea to the very middle of Norway; and the isle is called Saela where they landed, and is outside of Stad. King Olaf said he thought it must be a lucky day for them, since they had landed at Saela in Norway; and

observed it was a good omen that it so happened. As they were going up in the isle, the king slipped with one foot in a place where there was clay, but supported himself with the other foot. Then said he "The king falls." "Nay," replies Hrane, "thou didst not fall, king, but set fast foot in the soil." The king laughed thereat, and said, "It may be so if God will." They went down again thereafter to their ships, and sailed to Ulfasund, where they heard that Earl Hakon was south in Sogn, and was expected north as soon as wind allowed with a single ship.

28. HAKON TAKEN PRISONER BY OLAF.

King Olaf steered his ships within the ordinary ships' course when he came abreast of Fjaler district, and ran into Saudungssund. There he laid his two vessels one on each side of the sound with a thick cable between them. At the same moment Hakon, Earl Eirik's son, came rowing into the sound with a manned ship; and as they thought these were but two merchant-vessels that were lying in the sound, they rowed between them. Then Olaf and his men draw the cable up right under Hakon's ship's keel and wind it up with the capstan. As soon as the vessel's course was stopped her stern was lifted up, and her bow plunged down; so that the water came in at her fore-end and over both sides, and she upset. King Olaf's people took Earl Hakon and all his men whom they could get hold of out of the water, and made them prisoners; but some they killed with stones and other weapons, and some were drowned. So says Ottar:—

The black ravens wade
In the blood from thy blade.
Young Hakon so gay,
With his ship, is thy prey:
His ship, with its gear,
Thou hast ta'en; and art here,
Thy forefather's land
From the earl to demand.

Earl Hakon was led up to the king's ship. He was the handsomest man that could be seen. He had long hair, as fine as silk, bound about his bead with a gold ornament.

When he sat down in the fore-hold, the king said to him, "It is not false what is said of your family, that ye are handsome people to look at; but now your luck has deserted you."

Hakon the earl replied, "It has always been the case that success is changeable; and there is no luck in the matter. It has gone with your family as with mine, to have by turns the better lot. I am little beyond childhood in years; and at any rate we could not have defended ourselves, as we did not expect any attack on the way. It may turn out better with us another time."

Then said King Olaf, "Dost thou not apprehend that thou art in that condition that, hereafter, there can be neither victory nor defeat for thee?"

The earl replies, "That is what thou only canst determine, king, according to thy pleasure."

Olaf says, "What wilt thou give me, earl, if for this time I let thee go, whole and unhurt?"

The earl asks what he would take.

"Nothing," says the king, "except that thou shalt leave the country, give up thy kingdom, and take an oath that thou shalt never go into battle against me."

The earl answered, that he would do so. And now Earl Hakon took the oath that he would never fight against Olaf, or seek to defend Norway against him, or attack him; and King Olaf thereupon gave him and all his men life and peace. The earl got back the ship which had brought him there, and he and his men rowed their way. Thus says Sigvat of him:—

In old Saudungs sound
The king Earl Hakon found,
Who little thought that there
A foeman was so near.
The best and fairest youth
Earl Hakon was in truth,
That speaks the Danish tongue,
And of the race of great Hakon.

29. HAKON'S DEPARTURE FROM NORWAY.

After this (A.D. 1014) the earl made ready as fast as possible to leave the country and sail over to England. He met King Canute, his mother's brother, there, and told him all that had taken place between him and King Olaf. King Canute received him remarkably well, placed him in his court in his own house, and gave him great power in his kingdom. Earl Hakon dwelt a long time with King Canute. During the time Svein and Hakon ruled over Norway, a reconciliation with Erling Skialgson was effected, and secured by Aslak, Erling's son, marrying Gunhild, Earl Svein's daughter; and the father and son, Erling and Aslak, retained all the fiefs which King Olaf Trygvason had given to Erling. Thus Erling became a firm friend of the earl's, and their mutual friendship was confirmed by oath.

30. ASTA RECEIVES HER SON OLAF.

King Olaf went now eastward along the land, holding Things with the bondes all over the country. Many went willingly with him; but some, who were Earl Svein's friends or relations, spoke against him. Therefore King Olaf sailed in all haste eastward to Viken; went in there with his ships; set them on the land; and proceeded up the country, in order to meet his stepfather, Sigurd Syr. When he came to Vestfold he was received in a friendly way by many who had been his father's friends or acquaintances; and also there and in Folden were many of his family. In autumn (A.D. 1014) he proceeded up the country to his stepfather King Sigurd's, and came there one day very early. As Olaf was coming near to the house, some of the servants ran beforehand to the house, and into the room. Olaf's mother, Asta, was sitting in the room, and around her some of her girls. When the servants told her of King Olaf's approach, and that he might soon be expected, Asta stood up directly, and ordered the men and girls to put everything in the best order. She ordered four girls to bring out all that belonged to the decoration of the room and put it in order with hangings and benches. Two fellows brought straw for the floor, two brought forward four-cornered tables and the drinking-jugs, two bore out victuals and placed the meat on the table, two she sent away from the house to procure in the greatest haste all that was needed, and two carried in the ale; and all the other serving men and girls went outside of the house. Messengers went to seek King Sigurd wherever he might be, and brought to him his dress-clothes, and his horse with gilt saddle, and his bridle, which was gilt and set with precious stones. Four men she sent off to the four quarters of the country to invite all the great people to a feast, which she prepared as a rejoicing for her son's return. All who were before in the house she made to dress themselves with the best they had, and lent clothes to those who had none suitable.

31. KING SIGURD'S DRESS.

King Sigurd Syr was standing in his corn-field when the messengers came to him and brought him the news, and also told him all that Asta was doing at home in the house. He had many people on his farm. Some were then shearing corn, some bound it together, some drove it to the building, some unloaded it and put it in stack or barn; but the king, and two men with him, went sometimes into the field, sometimes to the place where the corn was put into the barn. His dress, it is told, was this:—he had a blue kirtle and blue breeches; shoes which were laced about the legs; a grey cloak, and a grey wide-brimmed hat; a veil before his face; a staff in his hand with a gilt-silver head on it and a silver ring around it. Of Sigurd's living and disposition it is related that he was a very gain-making man who attended carefully to his cattle and husbandry, and managed his housekeeping himself. He was nowise given to pomp, and was rather taciturn. But he was a man of the best understanding in Norway, and also excessively wealthy in movable property. Peaceful he was, and nowise haughty. His wife Asta was generous and high-minded. Their children were, Guthorm, the eldest; then Gunhild; the next Halfdan, Ingerid, and Harald. The messengers said to Sigurd, "Asta told us to bring thee word how much it lay at her heart that thou shouldst on this occasion comport thyself in the fashion of great men, and show a dispo-

sition more akin to Harald Harfager's race than to thy mother's father's, Hrane Thin-nose, or Earl Nereid the Old, although they too were very wise men." The king replies, "The news ye bring me is weighty, and ye bring it forward in great heat. Already before now Asta has been taken up much with people who were not so near to her; and I see she is still of the same disposition. She takes this up with great warmth; but can she lead her son out of the business with the same splendour she is leading him into it? If it is to proceed so methinks they who mix themselves up in it regard little property or life. For this man, King Olaf, goes against a great superiority of power; and the wrath of the Danish and Swedish kings lies at the foot of his determination, if he ventures to go against them."

32. OF THE FEAST.

When the king had said this he sat down, and made them take off his shoes, and put corduvan boots on, to which he bound his gold spurs. Then he put off his cloak and coat, and dressed himself in his finest clothes, with a scarlet cloak over all; girded on his sword, set a gilded helmet upon his head, and mounted his horse. He sent his labouring people out to the neighbourhood, and gathered to him thirty well-clothed men, and rode home with them. As they rode up to the house, and were near the room, they saw on the other side of the house the banners of Olaf coming waving; and there was he himself, with about 100 men all well equipped. People were gathered over all upon the house-tops. King Sigurd immediately saluted his stepson from horseback in a friendly way, and invited him and his men to come in and drink a cup with him. Asta, on the contrary, went up and kissed her son, and invited him to stay with her; and land, and people, and all the good she could do for him stood at his service. King Olaf thanked her kindly for her invitation. Then she took him by the hand, and led him into the room to the high-seat. King Sigurd got men to take charge of their clothes, and give their horses corn; and then he himself went to his high-seat, and the feast was made with the greatest splendour.

33. CONVERSATION OF OLAF AND SIGURD.

King Olaf had not been long here before he one day called his stepfather King Sigurd, his mother Asta, and his foster-father Hrane to a conference and consultation. Olaf began thus: "It has so happened," said he, "as is well known to you, that I have returned to this country after a very long sojourn in foreign parts, during all which time I and my men have had nothing for our support but what we captured in war, for which we have often hazarded both life and soul: for many an innocent man have we deprived of his property, and some of their lives; and foreigners are now sitting in the possessions which my father, his father, and their forefathers for a long series of generations owned, and to which I have udal right. They have not been content with this, but have taken to themselves also the properties of all our relations who are descended from Harald Harfager. To some they have left little, to others nothing at all. Now I will disclose to you what I have long concealed in my own mind, that I intend to take the heritage of my forefathers; but I will not wait upon the Danish or Swedish king to supplicate the least thing from them, although they for the time call that their property which was Harald Harfager's heritage. To say the truth, I intend rather to seek my patrimony with battle-axe and sword, and that with the help of all my friends and relations, and of those who in this business will take my side. And in this matter I will so lay hand to the work that one of two things shall happen,—either I shall lay all this kingdom under my rule which they got into their hands by the slaughter of my kinsman Olaf Trygvason, or I shall fall here upon my inheritance in the land of my fathers. Now I expect of thee, Sigurd, my stepfather, as well as other men here in the country who have udal right of succession to the kingdom, according to the law made by King Harald Harfager, that nothing shall be of such importance to you as to prevent you from throwing off the disgrace from our family of being slow at supporting the man who comes forward to raise up again our race. But whether ye show any manhood in this affair

or not, I know the inclination of the people well,—that all want to be free from the slavery of foreign masters, and will give aid and strength to the attempt. I have not proposed this matter to any before thee, because I know thou art a man of understanding, and can best judge how this my purpose shall be brought forward in the beginning, and whether we shall, in all quietness, talk about it to a few persons, or instantly declare it to the people at large. I have already shown my teeth by taking prisoner the Earl Hakon, who has now left the country, and given me, under oath, the part of the kingdom which he had before; and I think it will be easier to have Earl Svein alone to deal with, than if both were defending the country against us."

King Sigurd answers, "It is no small affair, King Olaf, thou hast in thy mind; and thy purpose comes more, methinks, from hasty pride than from prudence. But it may be there is a wide difference between my humble ways and the high thoughts thou hast; for whilst yet in thy childhood thou wast full always of ambition and desire of command, and now thou art experienced in battles, and hast formed thyself upon the manner of foreign chiefs. I know therefore well, that as thou hast taken this into thy head, it is useless to dissuade thee from it; and also it is not to be denied that it goes to the heart of all who have courage in them, that the whole Harfager race and kingdom should go to the ground. But I will not bind myself by any promise, before I know the views and intentions of other Upland kings; but thou hast done well in letting me know thy purpose, before declaring it publicly to the people. I will promise thee, however, my interest with the kings, and other chiefs, and country people; and also, King Olaf, all my property stands to thy aid, and to strengthen thee. But we will only produce the matter to the community so soon as we see some progress, and expect some strength to this undertaking; for thou canst easily perceive that it is a daring measure to enter into strife with Olaf the Swedish king, and Canute, who is king both of Denmark and England; and thou requirest great support under thee, if it is to succeed. It is not unlikely, in my opinion, that thou wilt get good support from the people, as the commonalty always loves what is new; and it went so before, when Olaf Trygvason came here to the country, that all rejoiced at it, although he did not long enjoy the kingdom."

When the consultation had proceeded so far, Asta took up the word. "For my part, my son, I am rejoiced at thy arrival, but much more at thy advancing thy honour. I will spare nothing for that purpose that stands in my power, although it be but little help that can be expected from me. But if a choice could be made, I would rather that thou shouldst be the supreme king of Norway, even if thou shouldst not sit longer in thy kingdom than Olaf Trygvason did, than that thou shouldst not be a greater king than Sigurd Syr is, and die the death of old age." With this the conference closed. King Olaf remained here a while with all his men. King Sigurd entertained them, day about, the one day with fish and milk, the other day with flesh-meat and ale.

34. KINGS IN THE UPLAND DISTRICTS.

At that time there were many kings in the Uplands who had districts to rule over, and the most of them were descended from Harald Harfager. In Hedemark two brothers ruled—Hrorek and Ring; in Gudbrandsdal, Gudrod; and there was also a king in Raumarike; and one had Hadaland and Thoten; and in Valders also there was a king. With these district-kings Sigurd had a meeting up in Hadaland, and Olaf Haraldson also met with them. To these district-kings whom Sigurd had assembled he set forth his stepson Olaf's purpose, and asked their aid, both of men and in counsel and consent; and represented to them how necessary it was to cast off the yoke which the Danes and Swedes had laid upon them. He said that there was now a man before them who could head such an enterprise; and he recounted the many brave actions which Olaf had achieved upon his war-expeditions.

Then King Hrorek says, "True it is that Harald Harfager's kingdom has gone to decay, none of his race being supreme king over Norway. But the people here in the country have experienced many things. When King Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, was king, all were content; but when Gunhild's sons ruled over the country,

all were so weary of their tyranny and injustice that they would rather have foreign men as kings, and be themselves more their own rulers; for the foreign kings were usually abroad and cared little about the customs of the people if the scat they laid on the country was paid. When enmity arose between the Danish king Harald and Earl Hakon, the Jomsborg vikings made an expedition against Norway; then the whole people arose, and threw the hostilities from themselves; and thereafter the people encouraged Earl Hakon to keep the country, and defend it with sword and spear against the Danish king. But when he had set himself fast in the kingdom with the help of the people, he became so hard and overbearing towards the country-folks, that they would no longer suffer him. The Throndhjem people killed him, and raised to the kingly power Olaf Trygvason, who was of the udal succession to the kingdom, and in all respects well fitted to be a chief. The whole country's desire was to make him supreme king, and raise again the kingdom which Harald Harfager had made for himself. But when King Olaf thought himself quite firmly seated in his kingdom, no man could rule his own concerns for him. With us small kings he was so unreasonable, as to take to himself not only all the scat and duties which Harald Harfager had levied from us, but a great deal more. The people at last had so little freedom under him, that it was not allowed to every man to believe in what god he pleased. Now since he has been taken away we have kept friendly with the Danish king; have received great help from him when we have had any occasion for it; and have been allowed to rule ourselves, and live in peace and quiet in the inland country, and without any overburden. I am therefore content that things be as they are, for I do not see what better rights I am to enjoy by one of my relations ruling over the country; and if I am to be no better off, I will take no part in the affair."

Then said King Ring, his brother, "I will also declare my opinion that it is better for me, if I hold the same power and property as now, that my relative is king over Norway, rather than a foreign chief, so that our family may again raise its head in the land. It is, besides, my opinion about this man Olaf, that his fate and luck must determine whether he is to obtain the kingdom or not; and if he succeed in making himself supreme king, then he will be the best off who has best deserved his friendship. At present he has in no respect greater power than any of us; nay, indeed, he has less; as we have lands and kingdoms to rule over, and he has nothing, and we are equally entitled by the udal right to the kingdom as he is himself. Now, if we will be his men, give him our aid, allow him to take the highest dignity in the country, and stand by him with our strength, how should he not reward us well, and hold it in remembrance to our great advantage, if he be the honourable man I believe him to be, and all say he is? Therefore let us join the adventure, say I, and bind ourselves in friendship with him."

Then the others, one after the other, stood up and spoke; and the conclusion was, that the most of them determined to enter into a league with King Olaf. He promised them his perfect friendship, and that he would hold by and improve the country's laws and rights, if he became supreme king of Norway. This league was confirmed by oath.

35. OLAF GETS THE TITLE OF KING FROM THE THING.

Thereafter the kings summoned a Thing, and there King Olaf set forth this determination to all the people, and his demand on the kingly power. He desires that the bondes should receive him as king; and promises, on the other hand, to allow them to retain their ancient laws, and to defend the land from foreign masters and chiefs. On this point he spoke well, and long; and he got great praise for his speech. Then the kings rose and spoke, the one after the other, and supported his cause, and this message to the people. At last it came to this, that King Olaf was proclaimed king over the whole country, and the kingdom adjudged to him according to law in the Uplands (A.D. 1014).

36. KING OLAF TRAVELS IN THE UPLANDS.

King Olaf began immediately his progress through the country, appointing feasts before him wherever there were royal farms. First he travelled round in Hadaland, and then he proceeded north to Gudbrandsdal. And now it went as King Sigurd Syr had foretold, that people streamed to him from all quarters; and he did not appear to have need for half of them, for he had nearly 300 men. But the entertainments bespoken did not half serve; for it had been the custom that kings went about in guest-quarters in the Uplands with 60 or 70 men only, and never with more than 100 men. The king therefore hastened over the country, only stopping one night at the same place. When he came north to Dovrefield, he arranged his journey so that he came over the mountain and down upon the north side of it, and then came to Opdal, where he remained all night. Afterwards he proceeded through Opdal forest, and came out at Medaldal, where he proclaimed a Thing, and summoned the bondes to meet him at it. The king made a speech to the Thing, and asked the bondes to accept him as king; and promised, on his part, the laws and rights which King Olaf Trygvason had offered them. The bondes had no strength to make opposition to the king; so the result was that they received him as king, and confirmed it by oath: but they sent word to Orkadal and Skaun of all that they knew concerning Olaf's proceedings.

37. LEVY AGAINST OLAF IN THRONDHJEM.

Einar Tambaskelfer had a farm and house at Husaby in Skaun; and now when he got news of Olaf's proceedings, he immediately split up a war-arrow, and sent it out as a token to the four quarters—north, south, east, west,—to call together all free and unfree men in full equipment of war: therewith the message, that they were to defend the land against King Olaf. The message-stick went to Orkadal, and thence to Gaulardal, where the whole war-force was to assemble.

38. OLAF'S PROGRESS IN THRONDHJEM.

King Olaf proceeded with his men down into Orkadal, and advanced in peace and with all gentleness; but when he came to Griotar he met the assembled bondes, amounting to more than 700 men. Then the king arrayed his army, for he thought the bondes were to give battle. When the bondes saw this, they also began to put their men in order; but it went on very slowly, for they had not agreed beforehand who among them should be commander. Now when King Olaf saw there was confusion among the bondes, he sent to them Thorer Gudbrandson; and when he came he told them King Olaf did not want to fight them, but named twelve of the ablest men in their flock of people, who were desired to come to King Olaf. The bondes agreed to this; and the twelve men went over a rising ground which is there, and came to the place where the king's army stood in array. The king said to them, "Ye bondes have done well to give me an opportunity to speak with you, for now I will explain to you my errand here to the Throndhjem country. First I must tell you, what ye already must have heard, that Earl Hakon and I met in summer; and the issue of our meeting was, that he gave me the whole kingdom he possessed in the Throndhjem country, which, as ye know, consists of Orkadal, Gaulardal, Strind, and Eyna district. As a proof of this, I have here with me the very men who were present, and saw the earl's and my own hands given upon it, and heard the word and oath, and witnessed the agreement the earl made with me. Now I offer you peace and law, the same as King Olaf Trygvason offered before me."

The king spoke well, and long; and ended by proposing to the bondes two conditions—either to go into his service and be subject to him, or to fight him. Thereupon the twelve bondes went back to their people, and told the issue of their errand, and considered with the people what they should resolve upon. Although they discussed the matter backwards and forwards for a while, they preferred at last to submit to the king; and it was confirmed by the oath of the bondes. The king now proceeded on his journey, and the bondes made feasts for him. The king then proceeded to

the sea-coast, and got ships; and among others he got a long-ship of twenty benches of rowers from Gunnar of Gelmin; another ship of twenty benches he got from Loden of Viggia; and three ships of twenty benches from the farm of Angrar on the ness which farm Earl Hakon had possessed, but a steward managed it for him, by name Bard White. The king had, besides, four or five boats; and with these vessels he went in all haste into the fjord of Throndhjem.

39. OF EARL SVEIN'S PROCEEDINGS.

Earl Svein was at that time far up in the Throndhjem fjord at Steinker, which at that time was a merchant town, and was there preparing for the yule festival (A.D. 1015). When Einar Tambaskelfer heard that the Orkadal people had submitted to King Olaf, he sent men to Earl Svein to bring him the tidings. They went first to Nidaros, and took a rowing-boat which belonged to Einar, with which they went out into the fjord, and came one day late in the evening to Steinker, where they brought to the earl the news about all King Olaf's proceedings. The earl owned a long-ship, which was lying afloat and rigged just outside the town: and immediately, in the evening, he ordered all his movable goods, his people's clothes, and also meat and drink, as much as the vessel could carry, to be put on board, rowed immediately out in the night-time, and came with daybreak to Skarnsund. There he saw King Olaf rowing in with his fleet into the fjord. The earl turned towards the land within Masarvik, where there was a thick wood, and lay so near the rocks that the leaves and branches hung over the vessel. They cut down some large trees, which they laid over the quarter on the sea-side, so that the ship could not be seen for leaves, especially as it was scarcely clear daylight when the king came rowing past them. The weather was calm, and the king rowed in among the islands; and when the king's fleet was out of sight the earl rowed out of the fjord, and on to Frosta, where his kingdom lay, and there he landed.

40. EARL SVEIN'S AND EINAR'S CONSULTATIONS.

Earl Svein sent men out to Gaulardal to his brother-in-law, Einar Tambaskelfer; and when Einar came the earl told him how it had been with him and King Olaf, and that now he would assemble men to go out against King Olaf, and fight him.

Einar answers, "We should go to work cautiously, and find out what King Olaf intends doing; and not let him hear anything concerning us but that we are quiet. It may happen that if he hears nothing about our assembling people, he may sit quietly where he is in Steinker all the Yule; for there is plenty prepared for him for the Yule feast: but if he hears we are assembling men, he will set right out of the fjord with his vessels, and we shall not get hold of him." Einar's advice was taken; and the earl went to Stjoradal, into guest-quarters among the bondes.

When King Olaf came to Steinker he collected all the meat prepared for the Yule feast, and made it be put on board, procured some transport vessels, took meat and drink with him, and got ready to sail as fast as possible, and went out all the way to Nidaros. Here King Olaf Trygvason had laid the foundation of a merchant town, and had built a king's house: but before that Nidaros was only a single house, as before related. When Earl Eirik came to the country, he applied all his attention to his house of Lade, where his father had had his main residence, and he neglected the houses which Olaf had erected at the Nid; so that some were fallen down, and those which stood were scarcely habitable. King Olaf went now with his ships up the Nid, made all the houses to be put in order directly that were still standing, and built anew those that had fallen down, and employed in this work a great many people. Then he had all the meat and drink brought on shore to the houses, and prepared to hold Yule there; so Earl Svein and Einar had to fall upon some other plan.

41. OF SIGVAT THE SKALD.

There was an Iceland man called Thord Sigvaldaskald, who had been long with Earl Sigvalde, and afterwards with the earl's brother, Thorkel the Tall; but after the earl's death Thord had be-

come a merchant. He met King Olaf on his viking cruise in the west, and entered into his service, and followed him afterwards. He was with the king when the incidents above related took place. Thord had a son called Sigvat fostered in the house of Thorkel at Apavatn, in Iceland. When he was nearly a grown man he went out of the country with some merchants; and the ship came in autumn to the Throndhjem country, and the crew lodged in the hered (district). The same winter King Olaf came to Throndhjem, as just now related by us. Now when Sigvat heard that his father Thord was with the king, he went to him, and stayed a while with him. Sigvat was a good skald at an early age. He made a lay in honour of King Olaf, and asked the king to listen to it. The king said he did not want poems composed about him, and said he did not understand the skald's craft. Then Sigvat sang:—

Rider of dark-blue ocean's steeds!
Allow one skald to sing thy deeds;
And listen to the song of one
Who can sing well, if any can.
For should the king despise all others,
And show no favour to my brothers,
Yet I may all men's favour claim,
Who sing, still of our great king's fame.

King Olaf gave Sigvat as a reward for his verse a gold ring that weighed half a mark, and Sigvat was made one of King Olaf's court-men. Then Sigvat sang:—

I willingly receive this sword—
By land or sea, on shore, on board,
I trust that I shall ever be
Worthy the sword received from thee.
A faithful follower thou hast bound—
A generous master I have found;
Master and servant both have made
Just what best suits them by this trade.

Earl Svein had, according to custom, taken one half of the harbour-dues from the Iceland ship-traders about autumn (A.D. 1014); for the Earls Eirik and Hakon had always taken one half of these and all other revenues in the Throndhjem country. Now when King Olaf came there, he sent his men to demand that half of the tax from the Iceland traders; and they went up to the king's house and asked Sigvat to help them. He went to the king, and sang:—

My prayer, I trust, will not be vain—
No gold by it have I to gain:
All that the king himself here wins
Is not red gold, but a few skins.
It is not right that these poor men
Their harbour-dues should pay again.
That they paid once I know is true;
Remit, great king, what scarce is due.

42. OF EARL SVEIN.

Earl Svein and Einar Tambaskelfer gathered a large armed force, with which they came by the upper road into Gaulardal, and so down to Nidaros, with nearly 2000 men. King Olaf's men were out upon the Gaular ridge, and had a guard on horseback. They became aware that a force was coming down the Gaulardal, and they brought word of it to the king about midnight. The king got up immediately, ordered the people to be awakened, and they went on board of the ships, bearing all their clothes and arms on board, and all that they could take with them, and then rowed out of the river. Then came the earl's men to the town at the same moment, took all the Christmas provision, and set fire to the houses. King Olaf went out of the fjord down to Orkadal, and there landed the men from their ships. From Orkadal they went up to the mountains, and over the mountains eastwards into Gudbrandsdal. In the lines composed about Kleng Brusason, it is said that Earl Eirik burned the town of Nidaros:—

The king's half-finished hall,
Rafters, root, and all,
Is burned down by the river's side;
The flame spreads o'er the city wide.

43. OF KING OLAF.

King Olaf went southwards through Gudbrandsdal, and thence out to Hedemark. In the depth of winter (A.D. 1015) he went about in guest-quarters; but when spring returned he collected men, and

went to Viken. He had with him many people from Hedemark, whom the kings had given him; and also many powerful people from among the bondes joined him, among whom Ketil Kalf from Ringanes. He had also people from Raumarike. His stepfather, Sigurd Syr, gave him the help also of a great body of men. They went down from thence to the coast, and made ready to put to sea from Viken. The fleet, which was manned with many fine fellows, went out then to Tunsberg.

44. OF EARL SVEIN'S FORCES.

After Yule (A.D. 1015) Earl Svein gathers all the men of the Throndhjem country, proclaims a levy for an expedition, and fits out ships. At that time there were in the Throndhjem country a great number of lendemen; and many of them were so powerful and well-born, that they descended from earls, or even from the royal race, which in a short course of generations reckoned to Harald Harfager, and they were also very rich. These lendemen were of great help to the kings or earls who ruled the land; for it was as if the lenderman had the bonde-people of each district in his power. Earl Svein being a good friend of the lendemen, it was easy for him to collect people. His brother-in-law, Einar Tambaskelfer, was on his side, and with him many other lendemen; and among them many, both lendemen and bondes, who the winter before had taken the oath of fidelity to King Olaf. When they were ready for sea they went directly out of the fjord, steering south along the land, and drawing men from every district. When they came farther south, abreast of Rogaland, Erling Skialgson came to meet them, with many people and many lendemen with him. Now they steered eastward with their whole fleet to Viken, and Earl Svein ran in there towards the end of Easter. The earl steered his fleet to Grenmar, and ran into Nesjar (A.D. 1015).

45. KING OLAF'S FORCES.

King Olaf steered his fleet out from Viken, until the two fleets were not far from each other, and they got news of each other the Saturday before Palm Sunday. King Olaf himself had a ship called the Carl's Head, on the bow of which a king's head was carved out, and he himself had carved it. This head was used long after in Norway on ships which kings steered themselves.

46. KING OLAF'S SPEECH.

As soon as day dawned on Sunday morning, King Olaf got up, put on his clothes, went to the land, and ordered to sound the signal for the whole army to come on shore. Then he made a speech to the troops, and told the whole assembly that he had heard there was but a short distance between them and Earl Svein. "Now," said he, "we shall make ready; for it can be but a short time until we meet. Let the people arm, and every man be at the post that has been appointed him, so that all may be ready when I order the signal to sound for casting off from the land. Then let us row off at once; and so that none go on before the rest of the ships, and none lag behind when I row out of the harbour: for we cannot tell if we shall find the earl where he was lying, or if he has come out to meet us. When we do meet, and the battle begins, let people be alert to bring all our ships in close order, and ready to bind them together. Let us spare ourselves in the beginning, and take care of our weapons, that we do not cast them into the sea, or shoot them away in the air to no purpose. But when the fight becomes hot and the ships are bound together, then let each man show what is in him of manly spirit."

47. OF THE BATTLE AT NESJAR.

King Olaf had in his ship 100 men armed in coats of ring-mail, and in foreign helmets. The most of his men had white shields, on which the holy cross was gilt; but some had painted it in blue or red. He had also had the cross painted in front on all the helmets, in a pale colour. He had a white banner on which was a serpent figured. He ordered a mass to be read before him, went on board ship, and ordered his people to refresh themselves with meat and drink. He then ordered the war-horns to sound to battle, to leave the harbour, and row off to seek the earl. Now when they came to the harbour where the earl had lain, the earl's men were armed,

and beginning to row out of the harbour; but when they saw the king's fleet coming they began to bind the ships together, to set up their banners, and to make ready for the fight. When King Olaf saw this he hastened the rowing, laid his ship alongside the earl's, and the battle began. So says Sigvat the skald:—

Boldly the king did then pursue
Earl Svein, nor let him out of view.
The blood ran down the reinder's flank
Of each sea-king—his vessel's plank.
Nor did the earl's stout warriors spare
In battle-brunt the sword and spear.
Earl Svein his ships of war pushed on,
And lashed their stout stems one to one.

It is said that King Olaf brought his ships into battle while Svein was still lying in the harbour. Sigvat the skald was himself in the fight; and in summer, just after the battle, he composed a lay, which is called the "Nesjar Song", in which he tells particularly the circumstances:—

In the fierce fight 'tis known how near
The scormer of the ice-cold spear
Laid the Charles' head the earl on board,
All eastward of the Agder fjord.

Then was the conflict exceedingly sharp, and it was long before it could be seen how it was to go in the end. Many fell on both sides, and many were the wounded. So says Sigvat:—

No urging did the earl require,
Midst spear and sword—the battle's fire;
No urging did the brave king need
The ravens in this shield-storm to feed.
Of limb-lopping enough was there,
And ghastly wounds of sword and spear.
Never, I think, was rougher play
Than both the armies had that day.

The earl had most men, but the king had a chosen crew in his ship, who had followed him in all his wars; and, besides, they were so excellently equipped, as before related, that each man had a coat of ring-mail, so that he could not be wounded. So says Sigvat:—

Our lads, broad-shouldered, tall, and hale,
Drew on their cold shirts of ring-mail.
Soon sword on sword was shrilly ringing,
And in the air the spears were singing.
Under our helms we hid our hair,
For thick flew arrows through the air.
Right glad was I our gallant crew,
Steel-clad from head to foot, to view.

48. EARL SVEIN'S FLIGHT.

When the men began to fall on board the earl's ships, and many appeared wounded, so that the sides of the vessels were but thinly beset with men, the crew of King Olaf prepared to board. Their banner was brought up to the ship that was nearest the earl's, and the king himself followed the banner. So says Sigvat:—

'On with the king!' his banners waving;
'On with the king!' the spears he's braving!
'On, steel-clad men! and storm the deck,
Slippery with blood and strewn with wreck.
A different work ye have to share,
His banner in war-storm to bear,
From your fair girl's, who round the hall
Brings the full mead-bowl to us all.'

Now was the severest fighting. Many of Svein's men fell, and some sprang overboard. So says Sigvat:—

Into the ship our brave lads spring,—
On shield and helm their red blades ring;
The air resounds with stroke on stroke,—
The shields are cleft, the helms are broke.
The wounded bonde o'er the side
Falls shrieking in the blood-stained tide—
The deck is cleared with wild uproar—
The dead crew float about the shore.

And also these lines:—

The shields we brought from home were white,
Now they are red-stained in the fight:
This work was fit for those who wore
Ring'd coats-of-mail their breasts before.
Where for the foe blunted the best sword
I saw our young king climb on board.
He stormed the first; we followed him—
The war-birds now in blood may swim.

Now defeat began to come down upon the earl's men. The king's men pressed upon the earl's ship and entered it; but when the earl saw how it was going, he called out to his forecastle-men to cut the cables and cast the ship loose, which they did. Then the king's men threw grapplings over the timber heads of the ship, and so held her fast to their own; but the earl ordered the timber heads to be cut away, which was done. So says Sigvat:—

The earl, his noble ship to save,
To cut the posts loud order gave.
The ship escaped: our greedy eyes
Had looked on her as a clear prize.
The earl escaped; but ere he fled
We feasted Odin's fowls with dead:—
With many a goodly corpse that floated
Round our ship's stern his birds were bloated.

Einar Tambaskelfer had laid his ship right alongside the earl's. They threw an anchor over the bows of the earl's ship, and thus towed her away, and they slipped out of the fjord together. Thereafter the whole of the earl's fleet took to flight, and rowed out of the fjord. The skald Berse Torfason was on the forecastle of the earl's ship; and as it was gliding past the king's fleet, King Olaf called out to him—for he knew Berse, who was distinguished as a remarkably handsome man, always well equipped in clothes and arms—"Farewell, Berse!" He replied, "Farewell, king!" So says Berse himself, in a poem he composed when he fell into King Olaf's power, and was laid in prison and in fetters on board a ship:—

Olaf the Brave
A 'farewell' gave,
(No time was there to parley long.)
To me who knows the art of song.
The skald was fain
'Farewell' again
In the same terms back to send—
The rule in arms to foe or friend.
Earl Svein's distress
I well can guess,
When flight he was compelled to take:
His fortunes I will ne'er forsake,
Though I lie here
In chains a year,
In thy great vessel all forlorn,
To crouch to thee I still will scorn:
I still will say,
No milder sway
Than from thy foe this land e'er knew:
To him, my early friend, I'm true.

49. EARL SVEIN LEAVES THE COUNTRY.

Now some of the earl's men fled up the country, some surrendered at discretion; but Svein and his followers rowed out of the fjord, and the chiefs laid their vessels together to talk with each other, for the earl wanted counsel from his lenders. Erling Skialgson advised that they should sail north, collect people, and fight King Olaf again; but as they had lost many people, the most were of opinion that the earl should leave the country, and repair to his brother-in-law the Swedish King, and strengthen himself there with men. Einar Tambaskelfer approved also of that advice, as they had no power to hold battle against Olaf. So they discharged their fleet. The earl sailed across Folden, and with him Einar Tambaskelfer. Erling Skialgson again, and likewise many other lenders who would not abandon their udal possessions, went north to their homes; and Erling had many people that summer about him.

50. OLAF'S AND SIGURD'S CONSULTATION.

When King Olaf and his men saw that the earl had gathered his ships together, Sigurd Syr was in haste for pursuing the earl, and letting steel decide their cause. But King Olaf replies, that he would first see what the earl intended doing—whether he would keep his force together or discharge his fleet. Sigurd Syr said, "It is for thee, king, to command; but," he adds, "I fear, from thy disposition and wilfulness, that thou wilt some day be betrayed by trusting to those great people, for they are accustomed of old to bid defiance to their sovereigns." There was no attack made, for it was soon seen that the earl's fleet was dispersing. Then King Olaf

ransacked the slain, and remained there some days to divide the booty. At that time Sigvat made these verses:—

The tale I tell is true
To their homes returned but few
Of Svein's men who came to meet
King Olaf's gallant fleet.
From the North these war-men came
To try the bloody game,—
On the waves their corpses borne
Show the game that Sunday morn.
The Throndhjem girls so fair
Their jeers, I think, will spare,
For the king's force was but small
That emptied Throndhjem's hall.
But if they will have their jeer,
They may ask their sweethearts dear,
Why they have returned shorn
Who went to shear that Sunday morn.

And also these:—

Now will the king's power rise,
For the Upland men still prize
The king who o'er the sea
Steers to bloody victory.
Earl Svein! thou now wilt know
That our lads can make blood flow—
That the Hedemarkers hale
Can do more than tap good ale.

King Olaf gave his stepfather King Sigurd Syr, and the other chiefs who had assisted him, handsome presents at parting. He gave Ketil of Ringanes a yacht of fifteen benches of rowers, which Ketil brought up the Raum river and into the Mjosen lake.

51. OF KING OLAF.

King Olaf sent spies out to trace the earl's doings (A.D. 1015); and when he found that the earl had left the country he sailed out west, and to Viken, where many people came to him. At the Thing there he was taken as king, and so he proceeded all the way to the Naze; and when he heard that Erling Skialgson had gathered a large force, he did not tarry in North Agder, but sailed with a steady fair wind to the Throndhjem country; for there it appeared to him was the greatest strength of the land, if he could subdue it for himself while the earl was abroad. When Olaf came to Throndhjem there was no opposition, and he was elected there to be king. In harvest (A.D. 1015) he took his seat in the town of Nidaros, and collected the needful winter provision (A.D. 1016). He built a king's house, and raised Clement's church on the spot on which it now stands. He parcelled out building ground, which he gave to bondes, merchants, or others who he thought would build. There he sat down with many men-at-arms around him; for he put no great confidence in the Throndhjem people, if the earl should return to the country. The people of the interior of the Throndhjem country showed this clearly, for he got no land-scat from them.

52. PLAN OF SVEIN AND THE SWEDISH KING.

Earl Svein went first to Svithjod to his brother-in-law Olaf the Swedish king, told him all that had happened between him and Olaf the Thick, and asked his advice about what he should now undertake. The king said that the earl should stay with him if he liked, and get such a portion of his kingdom to rule over as should seem to him sufficient; "or otherwise," says he, "I will give thee help of forces to conquer the country again from Olaf." The earl chose the latter; for all those among his men who had great possessions in Norway, which was the case with many who were with him, were anxious to get back; and in the council they held about this, it was resolved that in winter they should take the land-way over Helsingjaland and Jamtaland, and so down into the Throndhjem land; for the earl reckoned most upon the faithful help and strength of the Throndhjem people of the interior as soon as he should appear there. In the meantime, however, it was determined to take a cruise in summer in the Baltic to gather property.

53. EARL SVEIN'S DEATH.

Earl Svein went eastward with his forces to Russia, and passed the summer (A.D. 1015) in marauding there; but on the approach

of autumn returned with his ships to Svithjod. There he fell into a sickness, which proved fatal. After the earl's death some of the people who had followed him remained in Svithjod; others went to Helsingjaland, thence to Jamtaland, and so from the east over the dividing ridge of the country to the Throndhjem district, where they told all that had happened upon their journey: and thus the truth of Earl Svein's death was known (A.D. 1016).

54. OF THE THRONDHJEM PEOPLE.

Einar Tambaskelfer, and the people who had followed him went in winter to the Swedish king, and were received in a friendly manner. There were also among them many who had followed the earl. The Swedish king took it much amiss that Olaf the Thick had set himself down in his scat-lands, and driven the earl out of them, and therefore he threatened the king with his heaviest vengeance when opportunity offered. He said that Olaf ought not to have had the presumption to take the dominions which the earl had held of him; and all the Swedish king's men agreed with him. But the Throndhjem people, when they heard for certain that the earl was dead, and could not be expected back to Norway, turned all to obedience to King Olaf. Many came from the interior of the Throndhjem country, and became King Olaf's men; others sent word and tokens that they would service him. Then, in autumn, he went into the interior of Throndhjem, and held Things with the bondes, and was received as king in each district. He returned to Nidaros, and brought there all the king's scat and revenue, and had his winter-seat provided there (A.D. 1016).

55. OF KING OLAF'S HOUSEHOLD.

King Olaf built a king's house in Nidaros, and in it was a large room for his court, with doors at both ends. The king's high-seat was in the middle of the room; and within sat his court-bishop, Grimkel, and next him his other priests; without them sat his counsellors; and in the other high-seat opposite to the king sat his marshal, Bjorn, and next to him his pursuivants. When people of importance came to him, they also had a seat of honour. The ale was drunk by the fire-light. He divided the service among his men after the fashion of other kings. He had in his house sixty court-men and thirty pursuivants; and to them he gave pay and certain regulations. He had also thirty house-servants to do the needful work about the house, and procure what was required. He had, besides, many slaves. At the house were many outbuildings, in which the court-men slept. There was also a large room, in which the king held his court-meetings.

56. OF KING OLAF'S HABITS.

It was King Olaf's custom to rise betimes in the morning, put on his clothes, wash his hands, and then go to the church and hear the matins and morning mass. Thereafter he went to the Thing-meeting, to bring people to agreement with each other, or to talk of one or the other matter that appeared to him necessary. He invited to him great and small who were known to be men of understanding. He often made them recite to him the laws which Hakon Athelstan's foster-son had made for Throndhjem; and after considering them with those men of understanding, he ordered laws adding to or taking from those established before. But Christian privileges he settled according to the advice of Bishop Grimbel and other learned priests; and bent his whole mind to uprooting heathenism, and old customs which he thought contrary to Christianity. And he succeeded so far that the bondes accepted of the laws which the king proposed. So says Sigvat:—

The king, who at the helm guides
His warlike ship through clashing tides,
Now gives one law for all the land—
A heavenly law, which long will stand.

King Olaf was a good and very gentle man, of little speech, and open-handed although greedy of money. Sigvat the skald, as before related, was in King Olaf's house, and several Iceland men. The king asked particularly how Christianity was observed in Iceland, and it appeared to him to be very far from where it ought to be; for, as to observing Christian practices, it was told the king that it was permitted there to eat horse-flesh, to expose infants as

heathens do, besides many other things contrary to Christianity. They also told the king about many principal men who were then in Iceland. Skapte Thorodson was then the lagman of the country. He inquired also of those who were best acquainted with it about the state of people in other distant countries; and his inquiries turned principally on how Christianity was observed in the Orkney, Shetland, and Farey Islands: and, as far as he could learn, it was far from being as he could have wished. Such conversation was usually carried on by him; or else he spoke about the laws and rights of the country.

57. KING OLAF'S MESSENGERS.

The same winter (A.D. 1016) came messengers from the Swedish king, Olaf the Swede, out of Svithjod: and their leaders were two brothers, Thorgaut Skarde and Asgaut the bailiff; and they, had twenty-four men with them, when they came from the eastward, over the ridge of the country down into Veradal, they summoned a Thing of the bondes, talked to them, and demanded of them scat and duties upon account of the king of Sweden. But the bondes, after consulting with each other, determined only to pay the scat which the Swedish king required in so far as King Olaf required none upon his account, but refused to pay scat to both. The messengers proceeded farther down the valley; but received at every Thing they held the same answer, and no money. They went forward to Skaun, held a Thing there, and demanded scat; but it went there as before. Then they came to Stjoradal, and summoned a Thing, but the bondes would not come to it. Now the messengers saw that their business was a failure; and Thorgaut proposed that they should turn about, and go eastward again. "I do not think," says Asgaut, "that we have performed the king's errand unless we go to King Olaf the Thick, since the bondes refer the matter to him." He was their commander; so they proceeded to the town (Nidaros), and took lodging there. The day after they presented themselves to the king, just as he was seated at table, saluted him, and said they came with a message of the Swedish king. The king told them to come to him next day. Next day the king, having heard mass, went to his Thing-house, ordered the messengers of the Swedish king to be called, and told them to produce their message. Then Thorgaut spoke, and told first what his errand was, and next how the Throndhjem people of the interior had replied to it; and asked the king's decision on the business, that they might know what result their errand there was to have. The king answers, "While the earls ruled over the country, it was not to be wondered at if the country people thought themselves bound to obey them, as they were at least of the royal race of the kingdom. But it would have been more just if those earls had given assistance and service to the kings who had a right to the country, rather than to foreign kings, or to stir up opposition to their lawful kings, depriving them of their land and kingdom. With regard to Olaf the Swede, who calls himself entitled to the kingdom of Norway, I, who in fact am so entitled, can see no ground for his claim; but well remember the skaith and damage we have suffered from him and his relations."

Then says Asgaut. "It is not wonderful that thou art called Olaf the Thick, seeing thou answerest so haughtily to such a prince's message, and canst not see clearly how heavy the king's wrath will be for thee to support, as many have experienced who had greater strength than thou appearest to have. But if thou wishest to keep hold of thy kingdom, it will be best for thee to come to the king, and be his man; and we shall beg him to give thee this kingdom in fief under him."

The king replies with all gentleness, "I will give thee an advice, Asgaut, in return. Go back to the east again to thy king, and tell him that early in spring I will make myself ready, and will proceed eastward to the ancient frontier that divided formerly the kingdom of the kings of Norway from Sweden. There he may come if he likes, that we may conclude a peace with each other; and each of us will retain the kingdom to which he is born."

Now the messengers turned back to their lodging, and prepared for their departure, and the king went to table. The messengers came back soon after to the king's house; but the doorkeepers saw it, and reported it to the king, who told them not to let the mes-

sengers in. "I will not speak with them," said he. Then the messengers went off, and Thorgaut said he would now return home with his men; but Asgaut insisted still that he would go forward with the king's errand: so they separated. Thorgaut proceeded accordingly through Strind; but Asgaut went into Gaulardal and Orkadal, and intended proceeding southwards to More, to deliver his king's message. When King Olaf came to the knowledge of this he sent out his pursuivants after them, who found them at the ness in Stein, bound their hands behind their backs, and led them down to the point called Gaularas, where they raised a gallows, and hanged them so that they could be seen by those who travelled the usual sea-way out of the fjord. Thorgaut heard this news before he had travelled far on his way home through the Throndhjem country; and he hastened on his journey until he came to the Swedish king, and told him how it had gone with them. The king was highly enraged when he heard the account of it; and he had no lack of high words.

58. OLAF AND ERLING RECONCILED.

The spring thereafter (A.D. 1016) King Olaf Haraldson calls out an army from the Throndhjem land, and makes ready to proceed eastward. Some of the Iceland traders were then ready to sail from Norway. With them King Olaf sent word and token to Hjalte Skeg-jason, and summoned him to come to him, and at the same time sent a verbal message to Skapte the lagman, and other men who principally took part in the lawgiving of Iceland, to take out of the law whatever appeared contrary to Christianity. He sent, besides, a message of friendship to the people in general. The king then proceeded southwards himself along the coast, stopping at every district, and holding Things with the bondes; and in each Thing he ordered the Christian law to be read, together with the message of salvation thereunto belonging, and with which many ill customs and much heathenism were swept away at once among the common people: for the earls had kept well the old laws and rights of the country; but with respect to keeping Christianity, they had allowed every man to do as he liked. It was thus come so far that the people were baptized in the most places on the sea-coast, but the most of them were ignorant of Christian law. In the upper ends of the valleys, and in the habitations among the mountains, the greater part of the people were heathen; for when the common man is left to himself, the faith he has been taught in his childhood is that which has the strongest hold over his inclination. But the king threatened the most violent proceedings against great or small, who, after the king's message, would not adopt Christianity. In the meantime Olaf was proclaimed king in every Law Thing in the country, and no man spoke against him. While he lay in Karmsund messengers went between him and Erling Skjalgson, who endeavoured to make peace between them; and the meeting was appointed in Whittings Isle. When they met they spoke with each other about agreement together; but Erling found something else than he expected in the conversation: for when he insisted on having all the fiefs which Olaf Trygvason, and afterwards the Earls Svein and Hakon, had given him, and on that condition would be his man and dutiful friend, the king answered, "It appears to me, Erling, that it would be no bad bargain for thee to get as great fiefs from me for thy aid and friendship as thou hadst from Earl Eirik, a man who had done thee the greatest injury by the bloodshed of thy men; but even if I let thee remain the greatest lenderman in Norway, I will bestow my fiefs according to my own will, and not act as if ye lendermen had udal right to my ancestor's heritage, and I was obliged to buy your services with manifold rewards." Erling had no disposition to sue for even the smallest thing; and he saw that the king was not easily dealt with. He saw also that he had only two conditions before him: the one was to make no agreement with the king, and stand by the consequences; the other to leave it entirely to the king's pleasure. Although it was much against his inclination, he chose the latter, and merely said to the king, "The service will be the most useful to thee which I give with a free will." And thus their conference ended. Erling's relations and friends came to him afterwards, and advised him to give way, and proceed with more prudence and less pride. "Thou wilt still," they said, "be the most important and most

respected lenderman in Norway, both on account of thy own and thy relations' abilities and great wealth." Erling found that this was prudent advice, and that they who gave it did so with a good intention, and he followed it accordingly. Erling went into the king's service on such conditions as the king himself should determine and please. Thereafter they separated in some shape reconciled, and Olaf went his way eastward along the coast (A.D. 1016).

59. EILIF OF GAUTLAND'S MURDER.

As soon as it was reported that Olaf had come to Viken, the Danes who had offices under the Danish king set off for Denmark, without waiting for King Olaf. But King Olaf sailed in along Viken, holding Things with the bondes. All the people of the country submitted to him, and thereafter he took all the king's taxes, and remained the summer (A.D. 1016) in Viken. He then sailed east from Tunsberg across the fjord, and all the way east to Svinasund. There the Swedish king's dominions begin, and he had set officers over this country; namely, Eilif Gautske over the north part, and Hroe Skjalge over the east part, all the way to the Gaut river. Hroe had family friends on both sides of the river, and also great farms on Hising Island, and was besides a mighty and very rich man. Eilif was also of great family, and very wealthy. Now when King Olaf came to Ranrike he summoned the people to a Thing, and all who dwelt on the sea-coast or in the out-islands came to him. Now when the Thing was seated the king's marshal, Bjorn, held a speech to them, in which he told the bondes to receive Olaf as their king, in the same way as had been done in all other parts of Norway. Then stood up a bold bonde by name Brynjolf Ulfalde, and said, "We bondes know where the division-boundaries between the Norway and Danish and Swedish kings' lands have stood by rights in old times; namely, that the Gaut river divided their lands between the Vener lake and the sea; but towards the north the forests until Eid forest, and from thence the ridge of the country all north to Finmark. We know, also, that by turns they have made inroads upon each other's territories, and that the Swedes have long had power all the way to Svinasund. But, sooth to say, I know that it is the inclination of many rather to serve the king of Norway, but they dare not; for the Swedish king's dominions surround us, both eastward, southwards, and also up the country; and besides, it may be expected that the king of Norway must soon go to the north, where the strength of his kingdom lies, and then we have no power to withstand the Gautlanders. Now it is for the king to give us good counsel, for we have great desire to be his men." After the Thing, in the evening, Brynjolf was in the king's tent, and the day after likewise, and they had much private conversation together. Then the king proceeded eastwards along Viken. Now when Eilif heard of his arrival, he sent out spies to discover what he was about; but he himself, with thirty men, kept himself high up in the habitations among the hills, where he had gathered together bondes. Many of the bondes came to King Olaf, but some sent friendly messages to him. People went between King Olaf and Eilif, and they entreated each separately to hold a Thing-meeting between themselves, and make peace in one way or another. They told Eilif that they might expect violent treatment from King Olaf if they opposed his orders; but promised Eilif he should not want men. It was determined that they should come down from the high country, and hold a thing with the bondes and the king. King Olaf thereupon sent the chief of his pursuivants, Thoror Lange, with six men, to Brynjolf. They were equipped with their coats-of-mail under their cloaks, and their hats over their helmets. The following day the bondes came in crowds down with Eilif; and in his suite was Brynjolf, and with him Thoror. The king laid his ships close to a rocky knoll that stuck out into the sea, and upon it the king went with his people, and sat down. Below was a flat field, on which the bondes' force was; but Eilif's men were drawn up, forming a shield-fence before him. Bjorn the marshal spoke long and cleverly upon the king's account, and when he sat down Eilif arose to speak; but at the same moment Thoror Lange rose, drew his sword, and struck Eilif on the neck, so that his head flew off. Then the whole bonde-force started up; but the Gautland men set off in full flight and Thoror with his people killed several of them. Now when the crowd was settled again, and the noise over the

king stood up, and told the bondes to seat themselves. They did so, and then much was spoken. The end of it was that they submitted to the king, and promised fidelity to him; and he, on the other hand, promised not to desert them, but to remain at hand until the discord between him and the Swedish Olaf was settled in one way or other. King Olaf then brought the whole northern district under his power, and went in summer eastward as far as the Gaut river, and got all the king's scat among the islands. But when summer (A.D. 1016) was drawing towards an end he returned north to Viken, and sailed up the Raum river to a waterfall called Sarp. On the north side of the fall, a point of land juts out into the river. There the king ordered a rampart to be built right across the ness, of stone, turf, and wood, and a ditch to be dug in front of it; so that it was a large earthen fort or burgh, which he made a merchant town of. He had a king's house put up, and ordered the building of Mary church. He also laid out plans for other houses, and got people to build on them. In harvest (A.D. 1016) he let everything be gathered there that was useful for his winter residence (A.D. 1017), and sat there with a great many people, and the rest he quartered in the neighbouring districts. The king prohibited all exports from Viken to Gautland of herrings and salt, which the Gautland people could ill do without. This year the king held a great Yule feast, to which he invited many great bondes.

60. THE HISTORY OF EYVIND URARHORN.

There was a man called Eyvind Urarhorn, who was a great man, of high birth, who had his descent from the East Agder country. Every summer he went out on a viking cruise, sometimes to the West sea, sometimes to the Baltic, sometimes south to Flanders, and had a well-armed cutter (snekia) of twenty benches of rowers. He had been also at Nesjar, and given his aid to the king; and when they separated the king promised him his favour, and Eyvind, again, promised to come to the king's aid whenever he was required. This winter (A.D. 1017) Eyvind was at the Yule feast of the king, and received goodly gifts from him. Brynjolf Ulfalde was also with the king, and he received a Yule present from the king of a gold-mounted sword, and also a farm called Vettaland, which is a very large head-farm of the district. Brynjolf composed a song about these gifts, of which the refrain was—

The song-famed hero to my hand
Gave a good sword, and Vettaland.

The king afterwards gave him the title of Lenderman, and Brynjolf was ever after the king's greatest friend.

61. THRAND WHITE'S MURDER.

This winter (A.D. 1017) Thrand White from Thronthjem went east to Jamtaland, to take up scat upon account of King Olaf. But when he had collected the scat he was surprised by men of the Swedish king, who killed him and his men, twelve in all, and brought the scat to the Swedish king. King Olaf was very ill-pleased when he heard this news.

62. CHRISTIANITY PROCLAIMED IN VIKEN.

King Olaf made Christian law to be proclaimed in Viken, in the same way as in the North country. It succeeded well, because the people of Viken were better acquainted with the Christian customs than the people in the north; for, both winter and summer, there were many merchants in Viken, both Danish and Saxon. The people of Viken, also, had much trading intercourse with England, and Saxony, and Flanders, and Denmark; and some had been on viking expeditions, and had had their winter abode in Christian lands.

63. HROE'S FALL.

About spring-time (A.D. 1017) King Olaf sent a message that Eyvind Urarhorn should come to him; and they spake together in private for a long time. Thereafter Eyvind made himself ready for a viking cruise. He sailed south towards Viken, and brought up at the Eikreys Isles without Hising Isle. There he heard that

Hroe Skialge had gone northwards towards Ordost, and had there made a levy of men and goods on account of the Swedish king, and was expected from the north. Eyvind rowed in by Haugasund, and Hroe came rowing from the north, and they met in the sound and fought. Hroe fell there, with nearly thirty men; and Eyvind took all the goods Hroe had with him. Eyvind then proceeded to the Baltic, and was all summer on a viking cruise.

64. FALL OF GUDLEIK AND THORGAUT.

There was a man called Gudleik Gerske, who came originally from Agder. He was a great merchant, who went far and wide by sea, was very rich, and drove a trade with various countries. He often went east to Gardariki (Russia), and therefore was called Gudleik Gerske (the Russian). This spring (A.D. 1017) Gudleik fitted out his ship, and intended to go east in summer to Russia. King Olaf sent a message to him that he wanted to speak to him; and when Gudleik came to the king he told him he would go in partnership with him, and told him to purchase some costly articles which were difficult to be had in this country. Gudleik said that it should be according to the king's desire. The king ordered as much money to be delivered to Gudleik as he thought sufficient, and then Gudleik set out for the Baltic. They lay in a sound in Gotland; and there it happened, as it often does, that people cannot keep their own secrets, and the people of the country came to know that in this ship was Olaf the Thick's partner. Gudleik went in summer eastwards to Novgorod, where he bought fine and costly clothes, which he intended for the king as a state dress; and also precious furs, and remarkably splendid table utensils. In autumn (A.D. 1017), as Gudleik was returning from the east, he met a contrary wind, and lay for a long time at the island Eyland. There came Thorgaut Skarde, who in autumn had heard of Gudleik's course, in a long-ship against him, and gave him battle. They fought long, and Gudleik and his people defended themselves for a long time; but the numbers against them were great, and Gudleik and many of his ship's crew fell, and a great many of them were wounded. Thorgaut took all their goods, and King Olaf's, and he and his comrades divided the booty among them equally; but he said the Swedish king ought to have the precious articles of King Olaf, as these, he said, should be considered as part of the scat due to him from Norway. Thereafter Thorgaut proceeded east to Svithjod. These tidings were soon known; and as Eyvind Urarhorn came soon after to Eyland, he heard the news, and sailed east after Thorgaut and his troop, and overtook them among the Swedish isles on the coast, and gave battle. There Thorgaut and the most of his men were killed, and the rest sprang overboard. Eyvind took all the goods and all the costly articles of King Olaf which they had captured from Gudleik, and went with these back to Norway in autumn, and delivered to King Olaf his precious wares. The king thanked him in the most friendly way for his proceeding, and promised him anew his favour and friendship. At this time Olaf had been three years king over Norway (A.D. 1015-1017).

65. MEETING OF OLAF AND RAGNVALD.

The same summer (A.D. 1017) King Olaf ordered a levy, and went out eastwards to the Gaut river, where he lay a great part of the summer. Messages were passing between King Olaf, Earl Ragnvald, and the earl's wife, Ingebjorg, the daughter of Trygve. She was very zealous about giving King Olaf of Norway every kind of help, and made it a matter of her deepest interest. For this there were two causes. She had a great friendship for King Olaf; and also she could never forget that the Swedish king had been one at the death of her brother, Olaf Trygvason; and also that he, on that account only, had any presence to rule over Norway. The earl, by her persuasion, turned much towards friendship with King Olaf; and it proceeded so far that the earl and the king appointed a meeting, and met at the Gaut river. They talked together of many things, but especially of the Norwegian and Swedish kings' relations with each other; both agreeing, as was the truth also, that it was the greatest loss, both to the people of Viken and of Gautland, that there was no peace for trade between the two countries; and at last both agreed upon a peace, and still-stand of arms between them until next summer; and they parted with mutual gifts and

friendly speeches.

66. KING OLAF THE SWEDE.

The king thereupon returned north to Viken, and had all the royal revenues up to the Gaut river; and all the people of the country there had submitted to him. King Olaf the Swede had so great a hatred of Olaf Haraldson, that no man dared to call him by his right name in the king's hearing. They called him the thick man; and never named him without some hard by-name.

67. ACCOUNT OF THEIR RECONCILIATION.

The bondes in Viken spoke with each other about there being nothing for it but that the kings should make peace and a league with each other, and insisted upon it that they were badly used by the kings going to war; but nobody was so bold as to bring these murmurs before the king. At last they begged Bjorn the marshal to bring this matter before the king, and entreat him to send messengers to the Swedish king to offer peace on his side. Bjorn was disinclined to do this, and put it off from himself with excuses; but on the entreaties of many of his friends, he promised at last to speak of it to the king; but declared, at the same time, that he knew it would be taken very ill by the king to propose that he should give way in anything to the Swedish king. The same summer (A.D. 1017) Hjalte Skeggjason came over to Norway from Iceland, according to the message sent him by King Olaf, and went directly to the king. He was well received by the king, who told him to lodge in his house, and gave him a seat beside Bjorn the marshal, and Hjalte became his comrade at table. There was good-fellowship immediately between them.

Once, when King Olaf had assembled the people and bondes to consult upon the good of the country, Bjorn the marshal said, "What think you, king, of the strife that is between the Swedish king and you? Many people have fallen on both sides, without its being at all more determined than before what each of you shall have of the kingdom. You have now been sitting in Viken one winter and two summers, and the whole country to the north is lying behind your back unseen; and the men who have property or udal rights in the north are weary of sitting here. Now it is the wish of the lendemen, of your other people, and of the bondes that this should come to an end. There is now a truce, agreement, and peace with the earl, and the West Gautland people who are nearest to us; and it appears to the people it would be best that you sent messengers to the Swedish king to offer a reconciliation on your side; and, without doubt, many who are about the Swedish king will support the proposal, for it is a common gain for those who dwell in both countries, both here and there." This speech of Bjorn's received great applause.

Then the king said, "It is fair, Bjorn, that the advice thou hast given should be carried out by thyself. Thou shalt undertake this embassy thyself, and enjoy the good of it, if thou hast advised well; and if it involve any man in danger, thou hast involved thyself in it. Moreover, it belongs to thy office to declare to the multitude what I wish to have told." Then the king stood up, went to the church, and had high mass sung before him; and thereafter went to table.

The following day Hjalte said to Bjorn, "Why art thou so melancholy, man? Art thou sick, or art thou angry at any one?" Bjorn tells Hjalte his conversation with the king, and says it is a very dangerous errand.

Hjalte says, "It is their lot who follow kings that they enjoy high honours, and are more respected than other men, but stand often in danger of their lives: and they must understand how to bear both parts of their lot. The king's luck is great; and much honour will be gained by this business, if it succeed."

Bjorn answered, "Since thou makest so light of this business in thy speech, wilt thou go with me? The king has promised that I shall have companions with me on the journey."

"Certainly," says Hjalte; "I will follow thee, if thou wilt: for never again shall I fall in with such a comrade if we part."

68. JOURNEY OF BJORN THE MARSHAL.

A few days afterwards, when the king was at a Thing-meeting, Bjorn came with eleven others. He says to the king that they were now ready to proceed on their mission, and that their horses stood saddled at the door. "And now," says he, "I would know with what errand I am to go, or what orders thou givest us."

The king replies, "Ye shall carry these my words to the Swedish king—that I will establish peace between our countries up to the frontier which Olaf Trygvason had before me; and each shall bind himself faithfully not to trespass over it. But with regard to the loss of people, no man must mention it if peace there is to be; for the Swedish king cannot with money pay for the men the Swedes have deprived us of." Thereupon the king rose, and went out with Bjorn and his followers; and he took a gold-mounted sword and a gold ring, and said, in handing over the sword to Bjorn, "This I give thee: it was given to me in summer by Earl Ragnvald. To him ye shall go; and bring him word from me to advance your errand with his counsel and strength. This thy errand I will think well fulfilled if thou hearest the Swedish king's own words, be they yea or nay; and this gold ring thou shalt give Earl Ragnvald. These are tokens he must know well."

Hjalte went up to the king, saluted him, and said, "We need much, king, that thy luck attend us;" and wished that they might meet again in good health.

The king asked where Hjalte was going.

"With Bjorn," said he.

The king said, "It will assist much to the good success of the journey that thou goest too, for thy good fortune has often been proved; and be assured that I shall wish that all my luck, if that be of any weight, may attend thee and thy company."

Bjorn and his followers rode their way, and came to Earl Ragnvald's court, where they were well received. Bjorn was a celebrated and generally known man,—known by sight and speech to all who had ever seen King Olaf; for at every Thing, Bjorn stood up and told the king's message. Ingebjorg, the earl's wife, went up to Hjalte and looked at him. She recognized him, for she was living with her brother Olaf Trygvason when Hjalte was there; and she knew how to reckon up the relationship between King Olaf and Vilborg, the wife of Hjalte; for Eirik Bjodaskalle father of Astrid, King Olaf Trygvason's mother, and Bodvar father of Olaf, mother of Gissur White the father of Vilborg, were brother's sons of the lenderman Vikingakare of Vors.

They enjoyed here good entertainment. One day Bjorn entered into conversation with the earl and Ingebjorg, in which he set forth his errand, and produced to the earl his tokens.

The earl replies, "What hast thou done, Bjorn, that the king wishes thy death? For, so far from thy errand having any success, I do not think a man can be found who could speak these words to the Swedish king without incurring wrath and punishment. King Olaf, king of Sweden, is too proud for any man to speak to him on anything he is angry at."

Then Bjorn says, "Nothing has happened to me that King Olaf is offended at; but many of his disposition act both for themselves and others, in a way that only men who are daring can succeed in. But as yet all his plans have had good success, and I think this will turn out well too; so I assure you, earl, that I will actually travel to the Swedish king, and not turn back before I have brought to his ears every word that King Olaf told me to say to him, unless death prevent me, or that I am in bonds, and cannot perform my errand; and this I must do, whether you give any aid or no aid to me in fulfilling the king's wishes."

Then said Ingebjorg, "I will soon declare my opinion. I think, earl, thou must turn all thy attention to supporting King Olaf the king of Norway's desire that this message be laid before the Swedish king, in whatever way he may answer it. Although the Swedish king's anger should be incurred, and our power and property be at stake, yet will I rather run the risk, than that it should be said the message of King Olaf was neglected from fear of the Swedish king. Thou hast that birth, strength of relations, and other means, that here in the Swedish land it is free to thee to tell thy mind, if it be right and worthy of being heard, whether it

be listened to by few or many, great or little people, or by the king himself."

The earl replies, "It is known to every one how thou urgest me: it may be, according to thy counsel, that I should promise the king's men to follow them, so that they may get their errand laid before the Swedish king, whether he take it ill or take it well. But I will have my own counsel followed, and will not run hastily into Bjorn's or any other man's measures, in such a highly important matter. It is my will that ye all remain here with me, so long as I think it necessary for the purpose of rightly forwarding this mission." Now as the earl had thus given them to understand that he would support them in the business, Bjorn thanked him most kindly, and with the assurance that his advice should rule them altogether. Thereafter Bjorn and his fellow-travellers remained very long in the earl's house.

69. CONVERSATION OF BJORN AND INGEBJORG.

Ingebjorg was particularly kind to them; and Bjorn often spoke with her about the matter, and was ill at ease that their journey was so long delayed. Hjalte and the others often spoke together also about the matter; and Hjalte said; "I will go to the king if ye like; for I am not a man of Norway, and the Swedes can have nothing to say to me. I have heard that there are Iceland men in the king's house who are my acquaintances, and are well treated; namely, the skalds Gissur Black and Ottar Black. From them I shall get out what I can about the Swedish king; and if the business will really be so difficult as it now appears, or if there be any other way of promoting it, I can easily devise some errand that may appear suitable for me."

This counsel appeared to Bjorn and Ingebjorg to be the wisest, and they resolved upon it among themselves. Ingebjorg put Hjalte in a position to travel; gave him two Gautland men with him, and ordered them to follow him, and assist him with their service, and also to go wherever he might have occasion to send them. Besides, Ingebjorg gave him twenty marks of weighed silver money for travelling expenses, and sent word and token by him to the Swedish king Olaf's daughter, Ingegerd, that she should give all her assistance to Hjalte's business, whenever he should find himself under the necessity of craving her help. Hjalte set off as soon as he was ready. When he came to King Olaf he soon found the skalds Gissur and Ottar, and they were very glad at his coming. Without delay they went to the king, and told him that a man was come who was their countryman, and one of the most considerable in their native land, and requested the king to receive him well. The king told them to take Hjalte and his fellow-travellers into their company and quarters. Now when Hjalte had resided there a short time, and got acquainted with people, he was much respected by everybody. The skalds were often in the king's house, for they were well-spoken men; and often in the daytime they sat in front of the king's high-seat, and Hjalte, to whom they paid the highest respect in all things, by their side. He became thus known to the king, who willingly entered into conversation with him, and heard from him news about Iceland.

70. OF SIGVAT THE SKALD.

It happened that before Bjorn set out from home he asked Sigvat the skald, who at that time was with King Olaf, to accompany him on his journey. It was a journey for which people had no great inclination. There was, however, great friendship between Bjorn and Sigvat. Then Sigvat sang:—

With the king's marshals all have I,
In days gone by,
Lived joyously,—
With all who on the king attend,
And knee before him humbly bend,
Bjorn, thou oft hast ta'en my part—
Pleaded with art,
And touched the heart.
Bjorn! brave stainer of the sword,
Thou art my friend—I trust thy word.

While they were riding up to Gautland, Sigvat made these verses:—

Down the Fjord sweep wind and rain,
Our stout ship's sails and tackle strain;
Wet to the skin.
We're sound within,
And gaily o'er the waves are dancing,
Our sea-steed o'er the waves high prancing!
Through Lister sea
Flying all free;
Off from the wind with swelling sail,
We merrily scud before the gale,
And reach the sound
Where we were bound.
And now our ship, so gay and grand,
Glides past the green and lovely land,
And at the isle
Moors for a while.
Our horse-hoofs now leave hasty print;
We ride—of ease there's scanty stint—
In heat and haste
O'er Gautland's waste:
Though in a hurry to be married,
The king can't say that we have tarried.

One evening late they were riding through Gautland, and Sigvat made these verses:—

The weary horse will at nightfall
Gallop right well to reach his stall;
When night meets day, with hasty hoof
He plies the road to reach a roof.
Far from the Danes, we now may ride
Safely by stream or mountain-side;
But, in this twilight, in some ditch
The horse and rider both may pitch.

They rode through the merchant town of Skara, and down the street to the earl's house. He sang:—

The shy sweet girls, from window high
In wonder peep at the sparks that fly
From our horses' heels, as down the street
Of the earl's town we ride so fleet.
Spur on!—that every pretty lass
May hear our horse-hoofs as we pass
Clatter upon the stones so hard,
And echo round the paved court-yard.

71. HJALTE SKEGGJASON WHILE HE WAS IN SVITHIOD.

One day Hjalte, and the skalds with him, went before the king, and he began thus:—"It has so happened, king, as is known to you, that I have come here after a long and difficult journey; but when I had once crossed the ocean and heard of your greatness, it appeared to me unwise to go back without having seen you in your splendour and glory. Now it is a law between Iceland and Norway, that Iceland men pay landing due when they come into Norway, but while I was coming across the sea I took myself all the landing dues from my ship's people; but knowing that thou have the greatest right to all the power in Norway, I hastened hither to deliver to you the landing dues." With this he showed the silver to the king, and laid ten marks of silver in Gissur Black's lap.

The king replies, "Few have brought us any such dues from Norway for some time; and now, Hjalte, I will return you my warmest thanks for having given yourself so much trouble to bring us the landing dues, rather than pay them to our enemies. But I will that thou shouldst take this money from me as a gift, and with it my friendship."

Hjalte thanked the king with many words, and from that day set himself in great favour with the king, and often spoke with him; for the king thought, what was true, that he was a man of much understanding and eloquence. Now Hjalte told Gissur and Ottar that he was sent with tokens to the king's daughter Ingegerd, to obtain her protection and friendship; and he begged of them to procure him some opportunity to speak with her. They answered, that this was an easy thing to do; and went one day to her house, where she sat at the drinking table with many men. She received the skalds in a friendly manner, for they were known to her. Hjalte brought her a salutation from the earl's wife, Ingebjorg; and said she had sent him here to obtain friendly help and succour from her, and in proof whereof produced his tokens. The king's daughter received him also kindly, and said he should be welcome to her friendship. They sat there till late in the day drinking. The king's daughter made Hjalte tell her much news, and invited him

to come often and converse with her. He did so: came there often, and spoke with the king's daughter; and at last entrusted her with the purpose of Bjorn's and his comrade's journey, and asked her how she thought the Swedish king would receive the proposal that there should be a reconciliation between the kings. The king's daughter replied, that, in her opinion, it would be a useless attempt to propose to the king any reconciliation with Olaf the Thick; for the king was so enraged against him, that he would not suffer his name to be mentioned before him. It happened one day that Hjalte was sitting with the king and talking to him, and the king was very merry and drunk. Then Hjalte said, "Manifold splendour and grandeur have I seen here; and I have now witnessed with my eyes what I have often heard of, that no monarch in the north is so magnificent: but it is very vexatious that we who come so far to visit it have a road so long and troublesome, both on account of the great ocean, but more especially because it is not safe to travel through Norway for those who are coming here in a friendly disposition. But why is there no one to bring proposals for a peace between you and King Olaf the Thick? I heard much in Norway, and in west Gautland, of the general desire that this peace should have taken place; and it has been told me for truth, as the Norway king's words, that he earnestly desires to be reconciled to you; and the reason I know is, that he feels how much less his power is than yours. It is even said that he intends to pay his court to your daughter Ingegerd; and that would lead to a useful peace, for I have heard from people of credit that he is a remarkably distinguished man."

The king answers. "Thou must not speak thus, Hjalte; but for this time I will not take it amiss of thee, as thou dost not know what people have to avoid here. That fat fellow shall not be called king in my court, and there is by no means the stuff in him that people talk of: and thou must see thyself that such a connection is not suitable; for I am the tenth king in Upsala who, relation after relation, has been sole monarch over the Swedish, and many other great lands, and all have been the superior kings over other kings in the northern countries. But Norway is little inhabited, and the inhabitants are scattered. There have only been small kings there; and although Harald Harfager was the greatest king in that country, and strove against the small kings, and subdued them, yet he knew so well his position that he did not covet the Swedish dominions, and therefore the Swedish kings let him sit in peace, especially as there was relationship between them. Thereafter, while Hakon Athelstan's foster-son was in Norway he sat in peace, until he began to maraud in Gautland and Denmark; on which a war-force came upon him, and took from him both life and land. Gunhild's sons also were cut off when they became disobedient to the Danish kings; and Harald Gormson joined Norway to his own dominions, and made it subject to scat to him. And we reckon Harald Gormson to be of less power and consideration than the Upsala kings, for our relation Styrbjorn subdued him, and Harald became his man; and yet Eirik the Victorious, my father, rose over Styrbjorn's head when it came to a trial between them. When Olaf Trygvason came to Norway and proclaimed himself king, we would not permit it, but we went with King Svein, and cut him off; and thus we have appropriated Norway, as thou hast not heard, and with no less right than if I had gained it in battle, and by conquering the kings who ruled it before. Now thou canst well suppose, as a man of sense, that I will not let slip the kingdom of Norway for this thick fellow. It is wonderful he does not remember how narrowly he made his escape, when we had penned him in in the Malar lake. Although he slipped away with life from thence, he ought, methinks, to have something else in his mind than to hold out against us Swedes. Now, Hjalte, thou must never again open thy mouth in my presence on such a subject."

Hjalte saw sufficiently that there was no hope of the king's listening to any proposal of a peace, and desisted from speaking of it, and turned the conversation to something else. When Hjalte, afterwards, came into discourse with the king's daughter Ingegerd, he tells her his conversation with the king. She told him she expected such an answer from the king. Hjalte begged of her to say a good word to the king about the matter, but she thought the king would listen as little to what she said: "But speak about it I will, if thou requirest it." Hjalte assured her he would be thankful

for the attempt. One day the king's daughter Ingegerd had a conversation with her father Olaf; and as she found her father was in a particularly good humour, she said, "What is now thy intention with regard to the strife with Olaf the Thick? There are many who complain about it, having lost their property by it; others have lost their relations by the Northmen, and all their peace and quiet; so that none of your men see any harm that can be done to Norway. It would be a bad counsel if thou sought the dominion over Norway; for it is a poor country, difficult to come at, and the people dangerous: for the men there will rather have any other for their king than thee. If I might advise, thou wouldst let go all thoughts about Norway, and not desire Olaf's heritage; and rather turn thyself to the kingdoms in the East country, which thy forefathers the former Swedish kings had, and which our relation Styrbjorn lately subdued, and let the thick Olaf possess the heritage of his forefathers and make peace with him."

The king replies in a rage, "It is thy counsel, Ingegerd, that I should let slip the kingdom of Norway, and give thee in marriage to this thick Olaf."—"No," says he, "something else shall first take place. Rather than that, I shall, at the Upsala Thing in winter, issue a proclamation to all Swedes, that the whole people shall assemble for an expedition, and go to their ships before the ice is off the waters; and I will proceed to Norway, and lay waste the land with fire and sword, and burn everything, to punish them for their want of fidelity."

The king was so mad with rage that nobody ventured to say a word, and she went away. Hjalte, who was watching for her, immediately went to her and asked how her errand to the king had turned out. She answered, it turned out as she had expected; that none could venture to put in a word with the king; but, on the contrary, he had used threats; and she begged Hjalte never to speak of the matter again before the king. As Hjalte and Ingegerd spoke together often, Olaf the Thick was often the subject, and he told her about him and his manners; and Hjalte praised the king of Norway what he could, but said no more than was the truth, and she could well perceive it. Once, in a conversation, Hjalte said to her, "May I be permitted, daughter of the king, to tell thee what lies in my mind?"

"Speak freely," says she; "but so that I alone can hear it."

"Then," said Hjalte, "what would be thy answer, if the Norway king Olaf sent messengers to thee with the errand to propose marriage to thee?"

She blushed, and answered slowly but gently, "I have not made up my mind to answer to that; but if Olaf be in all respects so perfect as thou tellest me, I could wish for no other husband; unless, indeed, thou hast gilded him over with thy praise more than sufficiently."

Hjalte replied, that he had in no respect spoken better of the king than was true. They often spoke together on the same subject. Ingegerd begged Hjalte to be cautious not to mention it to any other person, for the king would be enraged against him if it came to his knowledge. Hjalte only spoke of it to the skalds Gisur and Ottar, who thought it was the most happy plan, if it could but be carried into effect. Ottar, who was a man of great power of conversation, and much beloved in the court, soon brought up the subject before the king's daughter, and recounted to her, as Hjalte had done, all King Olaf's excellent qualities. Often spoke Hjalte and the others about him; and now that Hjalte knew the result of his mission, he sent those Gautland men away who had accompanied him, and let them return to the earl with letters which the king's daughter Ingegerd sent to the earl and Ingebjorg. Hjalte also let them give a hint to the earl about the conversation he had had with Ingegerd, and her answer thereto: and the messengers came with it to the earl a little before Yule.

72. OLAF'S JOURNEY TO THE UPLANDS.

When King Olaf had despatched Bjorn and his followers to Gautland, he sent other people also to the Uplands, with the errand that they should have guest-quarters prepared for him, as he intended that winter (A.D. 1018) to live as guest in the Uplands; for it had been the custom of former kings to make a progress in guest-quarters every third year in the Uplands. In autumn he began

his progress from Sarpsborg, and went first to Vingulmark. He ordered his progress so that he came first to lodge in the neighbourhood of the forest habitations, and summoned to him all the men of the habitations who dwelt at the greatest distance from the head-habitations of the district; and he inquired particularly how it stood with their Christianity, and, where improvement was needful, he taught them the right customs. If any there were who would not renounce heathen ways, he took the matter so zealously that he drove some out of the country, mutilated others of hands or feet, or stung their eyes out; hung up some, cut down some with the sword; but let none go unpunished who would not serve God. He went thus through the whole district, sparing neither great nor small. He gave them teachers, and placed these as thickly in the country as he saw needful. In this manner he went about in that district, and had 300 deadly men-at-arms with him; and then proceeded to Raumarike. He soon perceived that Christianity was thriving less the farther he proceeded into the interior of the country. He went forward everywhere in the same way, converting all the people to the right faith, and severely punishing all who would not listen to his word.

73. TREACHERY OF THE UPLAND KINGS.

Now when the king who at that time ruled in Raumarike heard of this, he thought it was a very bad affair; for every day came men to him, both great and small, who told him what was doing. Therefore this king resolved to go up to Hedemark, and consult King Hrorek, who was the most eminent for understanding of the kings who at that time were in the country. Now when these kings spoke with each other, they agreed to send a message to Gudrod, the valley-king north in the Gudbrandsdal, and likewise to the king who was in Hadaland, and bid them to come to Hedemark, to meet Hrorek and the other kings there. They did not spare their travelling; for five kings met in Hedemark, at a place called Ringsaker. Ring, King Hrorek's brother, was the fifth of these kings. The kings had first a private conference together, in which he who came from Raumarike first took up the word, and told of King Olaf's proceedings, and of the disturbance he was causing both by killing and mutilating people. Some he drove out of the country, some he deprived of their offices or property if they spoke anything against him; and, besides, he was travelling over the country with a great army, not with the number of people fixed by law for a royal progress in guest-quarters. He added, that he had fled hither upon account of this disturbance, and many powerful people with him had fled from their udal properties in Raumarike. "But although as yet the evil is nearest to us, it will be but a short time before ye will also be exposed to it; therefore it is best that we all consider together what resolution we shall take." When he had ended his speech, Hrorek was desired to speak; and he said, "Now is the day come that I foretold when we had had our meeting at Hadaland, and ye were all so eager to raise Olaf over our heads; namely, that as soon as he was the supreme master of the country we would find it hard to hold him by the horns. We have but two things now to do: the one is, to go all of us to him, and let him do with us as he likes, which I think is the best thing we can do; or the other is, to rise against him before he has gone farther through the country. Although he has 300 or 400 men, that is not too great a force for us to meet, if we are only all in movement together: but, in general, there is less success and advantage to be gained when several of equal strength are joined together, than when one alone stands at the head of his own force; therefore it is my advice, that we do not venture to try our luck against Olaf Haraldson."

Thereafter each of the kings spoke according to his own mind some dissuading from going out against King Olaf, others urging it; and no determination was come to, as each had his own reasons to produce.

Then Gudrod, the valley-king, took up the word, and spoke:—"It appears wonderful to me, that ye make such a long roundabout in coming to a resolution; and probably ye are frightened for him. We are here five kings, and none of less high birth than Olaf. We gave him the strength to fight with Earl Svein, and with our forces he has brought the country under his power. But if he grudges

each of us the little kingdom he had before, and threatens us with tortures, or gives us ill words, then, say I for myself, that I will withdraw myself from the king's slavery; and I do not call him a man among you who is afraid to cut him off, if he come into your hands here up in Hedemark. And this I can tell you, that we shall never bear our heads in safety while Olaf is in life." After this encouragement they all agreed to his determination.

Then said Hrorek, "With regard to this determination, it appears to me necessary to make our agreement so strong that no one shall fail in his promise to the other. Therefore, if ye determine upon attacking Olaf at a fixed time, when he comes here to Hedemark, I will not trust much to you if some are north in the valleys, others up in Hedemark; but if our resolution is to come to anything, we must remain here assembled together day and night."

This the kings agreed to, and kept themselves there all assembled, ordering a feast to be provided for them at Ringsaker, and drank there a cup to success; sending out spies to Raumarike, and when one set came in sending out others, so that day and night they had intelligence of Olaf's proceedings, and of the numbers of his men. King Olaf went about in Raumarike in guest-quarters, and altogether in the way before related; but as the provision of the guest-quarter was not always sufficient, upon account of his numerous followers, he laid it upon the bondes to give additional contributions wherever he found it necessary to stay. In some places he stayed longer, in others, shorter than was fixed; and his journey down to the lake Miosen was shorter than had been fixed on. The kings, after taking their resolution, sent out message-tokens, and summoned all the lendemen and powerful bondes from all the districts thereabout; and when they had assembled the kings had a private meeting with them, and made their determination known, setting a day for gathering together and carrying it into effect; and it was settled among them that each of the kings should have 300 men. Then they sent away the lendemen to gather the people, and meet all at the appointed place. The most approved of the measure; but it happened here, as it usually does, that every one has some friend even among his enemies.

74. MUTILATING OF THE UPLAND KINGS.

Ketil of Ringanes was at this meeting. Now when he came home in the evening he took his supper, put on his clothes, and went down with his house-servants to the lake; took a light vessel which he had, the same that King Olaf had made him a present of, and launched it on the water. They found in the boat-house everything ready to their hands; betook themselves to their oars, and rowed out into the lake. Ketil had forty well-armed men with him, and came early in the morning to the end of the lake. He set off immediately with twenty men, leaving the other twenty to look after the ship. King Olaf was at that time at Eid, in the upper end of Raumarike. Thither Ketil arrived just as the king was coming from matins. The king received Ketil kindly. He said he must speak with the king in all haste; and they had a private conference together. There Ketil tells the king the resolution which the kings had taken, and their agreement, which he had come to the certain knowledge of. When the king learnt this he called his people together, and sent some out to collect riding-horses in the country; others he sent down to the lake to take all the rowing-vessels they could lay hold of, and keep them for his use. Thereafter he went to the church, had mass sung before him, and then sat down to table. After his meal he got ready, and hastened down to the lake, where the vessels were coming to meet him. He himself went on board the light vessel, and as many men with him as it could stow, and all the rest of his followers took such boats as they could get hold of; and when it was getting late in the evening they set out from the land, in still and calm weather. He rowed up the water with 400 men, and came with them to Ringsaker before day dawned; and the watchmen were not aware of the army before they were come into the very court. Ketil knew well in what houses the kings slept, and the king had all these houses surrounded and guarded, so that nobody could get out; and so they stood till daylight. The kings had not people enough to make resistance, but were all taken prisoners, and led before the king. Hrorek was an able but obstinate man, whose fidelity the king could not trust to if he made peace

with him; therefore he ordered both his eyes to be punched out, and took him in that condition about with him. He ordered Gudrod's tongue to be cut out; but Ring and two others he banished from Norway, under oath never to return. Of the lenders and bondes who had actually taken part in the traitorous design, some he drove out of the country, some he mutilated, and with others he made peace. Ottar Black tells of this:—

The giver of rings of gold,
The army leader bold,
In vengeance springs
On the Hedemark kings.
Olaf the bold and great,
Repayes their foul deceit—
In full repays
Their treacherous ways.
He drives with steel-clad hand
The small kings from the land,—
Greater by far
In deed of war.
The king who dwelt most north
Tongueless must wander forth:
All fly away
In great dismay.
King Olaf now rules o'er
What five kings ruled before.
To Eid's old bound
Extends his ground.
No kings in days of yore
E'er won so much before:
That this is so
All Norsemen know.

King Olaf took possession of the land these five kings had possessed, and took hostages from the lenders and bondes in it. He took money instead of guest-quarters from the country north of the valley district, and from Hedemark; and then returned to Raumarike, and so west to Hadaland. This winter (A.D. 1018) his step-father Sigurd Syr died; and King Olaf went to Ringerike, where his mother Asta made a great feast for him. Olaf alone bore the title of king now in Norway.

75. KING OLAF'S HALF-BROTHERS.

It is told that when King Olaf was on his visit to his mother Asta, she brought out her children, and showed them to him. The king took his brother Guthorm on the one knee, and his brother Halfdan on the other. The king looked at Guthorm, made a wry face, and pretended to be angry at them: at which the boys were afraid. Then Asta brought her youngest son, called Harald, who was three years old, to him. The king made a wry face at him also; but he looked the king in the face without regarding it. The king took the boy by the hair, and plucked it; but the boy seized the king's whiskers, and gave them a tug. "Then," said the king, "thou wilt be revengeful, my friend, some day." The following day the king was walking with his mother about the farm, and they came to a playground, where Asta's sons, Guthorm and Halfdan, were amusing themselves. They were building great houses and barns in their play, and were supposing them full of cattle and sheep; and close beside them, in a clay pool, Harald was busy with chips of wood, sailing them, in his sport along the edge. The king asked him what these were; and he answered, these were his ships of war. The king laughed, and said, "The time may come, friend, when thou wilt command ships."

Then the king called to him Halfdan and Guthorm; and first he asked Guthorm, "What wouldst thou like best to have?"

"Corn land," replied he.

"And how great wouldst thou like thy corn land to be?"

"I would have the whole ness that goes out into the lake sown with corn every summer." On that ness there are ten farms.

The king replies, "There would be a great deal of corn there." And, turning to Halfdan, he asked, "And what wouldst thou like best to have?"

"Cows," he replied.

"How many wouldst thou like to have?"

"When they went to the lake to be watered I would have so many, that they stood as tight round the lake as they could stand."

"That would be a great housekeeping," said the king; "and therein ye take after your father."

Then the king says to Harald, "And what wouldst thou like best to have?"

"House-servants."

"And how many wouldst thou have?"

"Oh! so many I would like to have as would eat up my brother Halfdan's cows at a single meal."

The king laughed, and said to Asta, "Here, mother, thou art bringing up a king." And more is not related of them on this occasion.

76. THE DIVISION OF THE COUNTRY.

In Svithjod it was the old custom, as long as heathenism prevailed, that the chief sacrifice took place in Goe month at Upsala. Then sacrifice was offered for peace, and victory to the king; and thither came people from all parts of Svithjod. All the Things of the Swedes, also, were held there, and markets, and meetings for buying, which continued for a week: and after Christianity was introduced into Svithjod, the Things and fairs were held there as before. After Christianity had taken root in Svithjod, and the kings would no longer dwell in Upsala, the market-time was moved to Candlemas, and it has since continued so, and it lasts only three days. There is then the Swedish Thing also, and people from all quarters come there. Svithjod is divided into many parts. One part is West Gautland, Vermaland, and the Marks, with what belongs to them; and this part of the kingdom is so large, that the bishop who is set over it has 1100 churches under him. The other part is East Gautland, where there is also a bishop's seat, to which the islands of Gotland and Eyland belong; and forming all together a still greater bishopric. In Svithjod itself there is a part of the country called Sudermanland, where there is also a bishopric. Then comes Westmanland, or Fiathrundaland, which is also a bishopric. The third portion of Svithjod proper is called Tiundaland; the fourth Attandaland; the fifth Sialand, and what belongs to it lies eastward along the coast. Tiundaland is the best and most inhabited part of Svithjod, under which the other kingdoms stand. There Upsala is situated, the seat of the king and archbishop; and from it Upsala-audr, or the domain of the Swedish kings, takes its name. Each of these divisions of the country has its Lag-thing, and its own laws in many parts. Over each is a lagman, who rules principally in affairs of the bondes: for that becomes law which he, by his speech, determines them to make law: and if king, earl, or bishop goes through the country, and holds a Thing with the bondes, the lagmen reply on account of the bondes, and they all follow their lagmen; so that even the most powerful men scarcely dare to come to their Al-thing without regarding the bondes' and lagmen's law. And in all matters in which the laws differ from each other, Upsala-law is the directing law; and the other lagmen are under the lagman who dwells in Tiundaland.

77. OF THE LAGMAN THORGNY.

In Tiundaland there was a lagman who was called Thorgny, whose father was called Thorgny Thorgnyson. His forefathers had for a long course of years, and during many kings' times, been lagmen of Tiundaland. At this time Thorgny was old, and had a great court about him. He was considered one of the wisest men in Sweden, and was Earl Ragnvald's relation and foster-father.

78. MEETING OF RAGNVALD AND INGEGERD.

Now we must go back in our story to the time when the men whom the king's daughter Ingegerd and Hjalte had sent from the east came to Earl Ragnvald. They relate their errand to the earl and his wife Ingebjorg, and tell how the king's daughter had oft spoken to the Swedish king about a peace between him and King Olaf the Thick, and that she was a great friend of King Olaf; but that the Swedish king flew into a passion every time she named Olaf, so that she had no hopes of any peace. The Earl told Bjorn the news he had received from the east; but Bjorn gave the same reply, that he would not turn back until he had met the Swedish king, and said the earl had promised to go with him. Now the winter was passing fast, and immediately after Yule the earl made himself ready to travel with sixty men, among whom where the

marshal Bjorn and his companions. The earl proceeded eastward all the way to Svithjod; but when he came a little way into the country he sent his men before him to Upsala with a message to Ingegerd the king's daughter to come out to meet him at Ullaraker, where she had a large farm. When the king's daughter got the earl's message she made herself ready immediately to travel with a large attendance, and Hjalte accompanied her. But before he took his departure he went to King Olaf, and said, "Continue always to be the most fortunate of monarchs! Such splendour as I have seen about thee I have in truth never witnessed elsewhere, and whosoever I come it shall not be concealed. Now, king, may I entreat thy favour and friendship in time to come?"

The king replies, "Why art thou in so great a haste, and where art thou going?"

Hjalte replies, "I am to ride out to Ullaraker with Ingegerd thy daughter."

The king says, "Farewell, then: a man thou art of understanding and politeness, and well suited to live with people of rank."

Thereupon Hjalte withdrew.

The king's daughter Ingegerd rode to her farm in Ullaraker, and ordered a great feast to be prepared for the earl. When the earl arrived he was welcomed with gladness, and he remained there several days. The earl and the king's daughter talked much, and of many things, but most about the Swedish and Norwegian kings; and she told the earl that in her opinion there was no hope of peace between them.

Then said the earl, "How wouldst thou like it, my cousin, if Olaf king of Norway were to pay his addresses to thee? It appears to us that it would contribute most towards a settled peace if there was relationship established between the kings; but I would not support such a matter if it were against thy inclination."

She replies, "My father disposes of my hand; but among all my other relations thou art he whose advice I would rather follow in weighty affairs. Dost thou think it would be advisable?" The earl recommended it to her strongly, and reckoned up many excellent achievements of King Olaf's. He told her, in particular, about what had lately been done; that King Olaf in an hours time one morning had taken five kings prisoners, deprived them all of their governments, and laid their kingdoms and properties under his own power. Much they talked about the business, and in all their conversations they perfectly agreed with each other. When the earl was ready he took leave, and proceeded on his way, taking Hjalte with him.

79. RAGNALD AND THORGNY.

Earl Ragnvald came towards evening one day to the house of Lagman Thorgny. It was a great and stately mansion, and many people stood outside, who received the earl kindly, and took care of the horses and baggage. The earl went into the room, where there was a number of people. In the high-seat sat an old man; and never had Bjorn or his companions seen a man so stout. His beard was so long that it lay upon his knee, and was spread over his whole breast; and the man, moreover, was handsome and stately in appearance. The earl went forward and saluted him. Thorgny received him joyfully and kindly, and bade him go to the seat he was accustomed to take. The earl seated himself on the other side, opposite Thorgny. They remained there some days before the earl disclosed his errand, and then he asked Thorgny to go with him into the conversing room. Bjorn and his followers went there with the earl. Then the earl began, and told how Olaf king of Norway had sent these men hither to conclude a peaceful agreement. He showed at great length what injury it was of to the West Gautland people, that there was hostility between their country and Norway. He further related that Olaf the king of Norway had sent ambassadors, who were here present, and to whom he had promised he would attend them to the Swedish king; but he added, "The Swedish king takes the matter so grievously, that he has uttered menaces against those who entertain it. Now so it is, my foster-father, that I do not trust to myself in this matter; but am come on a visit to thee to get good counsel and help from thee in the matter."

Now when the earl had done speaking Thorgny sat silent for a while, and then took up the word. "Ye have curious dispositions who are so ambitious of honour and renown, and yet have no prudence or counsel in you when you get into any mischief. Why did you not consider, before you gave your promise to this adventure, that you had no power to stand against King Olaf? In my opinion it is not a less honourable condition to be in the number of bondes and have one's words free, and be able to say what one will, even if the king be present. But I must go to the Upsala Thing, and give thee such help that without fear thou canst speak before the king what thou findest good."

The earl thanked him for the promise, remained with Thorgny, and rode with him to the Upsala Thing. There was a great assemblage of people at the Thing, and King Olaf was there with his court.

80. OF THE UPSALA THING.

The first day the Thing sat, King Olaf was seated on a stool, and his court stood in a circle around him. Right opposite to him sat Earl Ragnvald and Thorgny in the Thing upon one stool, and before them the earl's court and Thorgny's house-people. Behind their stool stood the bonde community, all in a circle around them. Some stood upon hillocks and heights, in order to hear the better. Now when the king's messages, which are usually handled in the Things, were produced and settled, the marshal Bjorn rose beside the earl's stool, and said aloud, "King Olaf sends me here with the message that he will offer to the Swedish king peace, and the frontiers that in old times were fixed between Norway and Svithjod." He spoke so loud that the Swedish king could distinctly hear him; but at first, when he heard King Olaf's name spoken, he thought the speaker had some message or business of his own to execute; but when he heard of peace, and the frontiers between Norway and Svithjod, he saw from what root it came, and sprang up, and called out that the man should be silent, for that such speeches were useless. Thereupon Bjorn sat down; and when the noise had ceased Earl Ragnvald stood up and made a speech.

He spoke of Olaf the Thick's message, and proposal of peace to Olaf the Swedish king; and that all the West Gautland people sent their entreaty to Olaf that he would make peace with the king of Norway. He recounted all the evils the West Gautlanders were suffering under; that they must go without all the things from Norway which were necessary in their households; and, on the other hand, were exposed to attack and hostility whenever the king of Norway gathered an army and made an inroad on them. The earl added, that Olaf the Norway king had sent men hither with the intent to obtain Ingegerd the king's daughter in marriage.

When the earl had done speaking Olaf the Swedish king stood up and replied, and was altogether against listening to any proposals of peace, and made many and heavy reproaches against the earl for his impudence in entering into a peaceful truce with the thick fellow, and making up a peaceful friendship with him, and which in truth he considered treason against himself. He added, that it would be well deserved if Earl Ragnvald were driven out of the kingdom. The earl had, in his opinion, the influence of his wife Ingebjorg to thank for what might happen; and it was the most imprudent fancy he could have fallen upon to take up with such a wife. The king spoke long and bitterly, turning his speech always against Olaf the Thick. When he sat down not a sound was to be heard at first.

81. THORGNY'S SPEECH.

Then Thorgny stood up; and when he arose all the bondes stood up who had before been sitting, and rushed together from all parts to listen to what Lagman Thorgny would say. At first there was a great din of people and weapons; but when the noise was settled into silent listening, Thorgny made his speech. "The disposition of Swedish kings is different now from what it has been formerly. My grandfather Thorgny could well remember the Upsala king Eirik Eymundson, and used to say of him that when he was in his best years he went out every summer on expeditions to different countries, and conquered for himself Finland, Kirjalaland, Courland, Esthonia, and the eastern countries all around; and at the

present day the earth-bulwarks, ramparts, and other great works which he made are to be seen. And, more over, he was not so proud that he would not listen to people who had anything to say to him. My father, again, was a long time with King Bjorn, and was well acquainted with his ways and manners. In Bjorn's lifetime his kingdom stood in great power, and no kind of want was felt, and he was gay and sociable with his friends. I also remember King Eirik the Victorious, and was with him on many a war-expedition. He enlarged the Swedish dominion, and defended it manfully; and it was also easy and agreeable to communicate our opinions to him. But the king we have now got allows no man to presume to talk with him, unless it be what he desires to hear. On this alone he applies all his power, while he allows his scat-lands in other countries to go from him through laziness and weakness. He wants to have the Norway kingdom laid under him, which no Swedish king before him ever desired, and therewith brings war and distress on many a man. Now it is our will, we bondes, that thou King Olaf make peace with the Norway king, Olaf the Thick, and marry thy daughter Ingegerd to him. Wilt thou, however, reconquer the kingdoms in the east countries which thy relations and forefathers had there, we will all for that purpose follow thee to the war. But if thou wilt not do as we desire, we will now attack thee, and put thee to death; for we will no longer suffer law and peace to be disturbed. So our forefathers went to work when they drowned five kings in a morass at the Mula-thing, and they were filled with the same insupportable pride thou hast shown towards us. Now tell us, in all haste, what resolution thou wilt take." Then the whole public approved, with clash of arms and shouts, the lagman's speech.

The king stands up and says he will let things go according to the desire of the bondes. "All Swedish kings," he said, "have done so, and have allowed the bondes to rule in all according to their will." The murmur among the bondes then came to an end, and the chiefs, the king, the earl, and Thorgny talked together, and concluded a truce and reconciliation, on the part of the Swedish king, according to the terms which the king of Norway had proposed by his ambassadors; and it was resolved at the Thing that Ingegerd, the king's daughter, should be married to Olaf Haraldson. The king left it to the earl to make the contract feast, and gave him full powers to conclude this marriage affair; and after this was settled at the Thing, they separated. When the earl returned homewards, he and the king's daughter Ingegerd had a meeting, at which they talked between themselves over this matter. She sent Olaf a long cloak of fine linen richly embroidered with gold, and with silk points. The earl returned to Gautland, and Bjorn with him; and after staying with him a short time, Bjorn and his company returned to Norway. When he came to King Olaf he told him the result of his errand, and the king returned him many thanks for his conduct, and said Bjorn had had great success in bringing his errand to so favourable a conclusion against such animosity.

82. OF KING HROREK'S TREACHERY.

On the approach of spring (A.D. 1018) King Olaf went down to the coast, had his ships rigged out, summoned troops to him, and proceeded in spring out from Viken to the Naze, and so north to Hordaland. He then sent messages to all the lendersmen, selected the most considerable men in each district, and made the most splendid preparations to meet his bride. The wedding-feast was to be in autumn, at the Gaut river, on the frontiers of the two countries. King Olaf had with him the blind king Hrorek. When his wound was healed, the king gave him two men to serve him, let him sit in the high-seat by his side, and kept him in meat and clothes in no respect Norse than he had kept himself before. Hrorek was taciturn, and answered short and cross when any one spoke to him. It was his custom to make his footboy, when he went out in the daytime, lead him away from people, and then to beat the lad until he ran away. He would then complain to King Olaf that the lad would not serve him. The king changed his servants, but it was as before; no servant would hold it out with King Hrorek. Then the king appointed a man called Svein to wait upon and serve King Hrorek. He was Hrorek's relation, and had formerly been in his service. Hrorek continued with his habits of

moroseness, and of solitary walks; but when he and Svein were alone together, he was merry and talkative. He used to bring up many things which had happened in former days when he was king. He alluded, too, to the man who had, in his former days, torn him from his kingdom and happiness, and made him live on alms. "It is hardest of all," says he, "that thou and my other relations, who ought to be men of bravery, are so degenerated that thou wilt not avenge the shame and disgrace brought upon our race." Such discourse he often brought out. Svein said, they had too great a power to deal with, while they themselves had but little means. Hrorek said, "Why should we live longer as mutilated men with disgrace? I, a blind man, may conquer them as well as they conquered me when I was asleep. Come then, let us kill this thick Olaf. He is not afraid for himself at present. I will lay the plan, and would not spare my hands if I could use them, but that I cannot by reason of my blindness; therefore thou must use the weapons against him, and as soon as Olaf is killed I can see well enough that his power must come into the hands of his enemies, and it may well be that I shall be king, and thou shalt be my earl." So much persuasion he used that Svein at last agreed to join in the deed. The plan was so laid that when the king was ready to go to vespers, Svein stood on the threshold with a drawn dagger under his cloak. Now when the king came out of the room, it so happened that he walked quicker than Svein expected; and when he looked the king in the face he grew pale, and then white as a corpse, and his hand sank down. The king observed his terror and said, "What is this, Svein? Wilt thou betray me?" Svein threw down his cloak and dagger, and fell at the king's feet, saying, "All is in God's hands and thine, king!" The king ordered his men to seize Svein, and he was put in irons. The king ordered Hrorek's seat to be moved to another bench. He gave Svein his life, and he left the country. The king appointed a different lodging for Hrorek to sleep in from that in which he slept himself, and in which many of his court-people slept. He set two of his court-men, who had been long with him, and whose fidelity he had proof of, to attend Hrorek day and night; but it is not said whether they were people of high birth or not. King Hrorek's mood was very different at different times. Sometimes he would sit silent for days together, so that no man could get a word out of him; and sometimes he was so merry and gay, that people found a joke in every word he said. Sometimes his words were very bitter. He was sometimes in a mood that he would drink them all under the benches, and made all his neighbours drunk; but in general he drank but little. King Olaf gave him plenty of pocket-money. When he went to his lodgings he would often, before going to bed, have some stoups of mead brought in, which he gave to all the men in the house to drink, so that he was much liked.

83. OF LITTLE FIN.

There was a man from the Uplands called Fin the Little, and some said of him that he was of Finnish race. He was a remarkable little man, but so swift of foot that no horse could overtake him. He was a particularly well-exercised runner with snow-shoes, and shooter with the bow. He had long been in the service of King Hrorek, and often employed in errands of trust. He knew the roads in all the Upland hills, and was well known to all the great people. Now when King Hrorek was set under guards on the journey Fin would often slip in among the men of the guard, and followed, in general, with the lads and serving-men; but as often as he could he waited upon Hrorek, and entered into conversation with him. The king, however, only spoke a word or two with him at a time, to prevent suspicion. In spring, when they came a little way beyond Viken, Fin disappeared from the army for some days, but came back, and stayed with them a while. This happened often, without anyone observing it particularly; for there were many such hangers-on with the army.

84. MURDER OF OLAF'S COURT-MEN.

King Olaf came to Tunsberg before Easter (A.D. 1018), and remained there late in spring. Many merchant vessels came to the town, both from Saxon-land and Denmark, and from Viken, and from the north parts of the country. There was a great assemblage

of people; and as the times were good, there was many a drinking meeting. It happened one evening that King Hrorek came rather late to his lodging; and as he had drunk a great deal, he was remarkably merry. Little Fin came to him with a stoup of mead with herbs in it, and very strong. The king made every one in the house drunk, until they fell asleep each in his berth. Fin had gone away, and a light was burning in the lodging. Hrorek waked the men who usually followed him, and told them he wanted to go out into the yard. They had a lantern with them, for outside it was pitch dark. Out in the yard there was a large privy standing upon pillars, and a stair to go up to it. While Hrorek and his guards were in the yard they heard a man say, "Cut down that devil;" and presently a crash, as if somebody fell. Hrorek said, "These fellows must be dead drunk to be fighting with each other so: run and separate them." They rushed out; but when they came out upon the steps both of them were killed: the man who went out the last was the first killed. There were twelve of Hrorek's men there, and among them Sigurd Hit, who had been his banner-man, and also little Fin. They drew the dead bodies up between the houses, took the king with them, ran out to a boat they had in readiness, and rowed away. Sigvat the skald slept in King Olaf's lodgings. He got up in the night, and his footboy with him, and went to the privy. But as they were returning, on going down the stairs Sigvat's foot slipped, and he fell on his knee; and when he put out his hands he felt the stairs wet. "I think," said he, laughing, "the king must have given many of us tottering legs tonight." When they came into the house in which light was burning the footboy said, "Have you hurt yourself that you are all over so bloody?" He replied, "I am not wounded, but something must have happened here." Thereupon he wakened Thord Folason, who was standard-bearer, and his bedfellow. They went out with a light, and soon found the blood. They traced it, and found the corpses, and knew them. They saw also a great stump of a tree in which clearly a gash had been cut, which, as was afterwards known, had been done as a stratagem to entice those out who had been killed. Sigvat and Thord spoke together and agreed it was highly necessary to let the king know of this without delay. They immediately sent a lad to the lodging where Hrorek had been. All the men in it were asleep; but the king was gone. He wakened the men who were in the house, and told them what had happened. The men arose, and ran out to the yard where the bodies were; but, however needful it appeared to be that the king should know it, nobody dared to waken him.

Then said Sigvat to Thord, "What wilt thou rather do, comrade, waken the king, or tell him the tidings?"

Thord replies, "I do not dare to waken him, and I would rather tell him the news."

Then said Sigvat, "There is minch of the night still to pass, and before morning Hrorek may get himself concealed in such a way that it may be difficult to find him; but as yet he cannot be very far off, for the bodies are still warm. We must never let the disgrace rest upon us of concealing this treason from the king. Go thou, up to the lodging, and wait for me there."

Sigvat then went to the church, and told the bell-ringer to toll for the souls of the king's court-men, naming the men who were killed. The bell-ringer did as he was told. The king awoke at the ringing, sat up in his bed, and asked if it was already the hours of matins.

Thord replies, "It is worse than that, for there has occurred a very important affair. Hrorek is fled, and two of the court-men are killed."

The king asked how this had taken place, and Thord told him all he knew. The king got up immediately, ordered to sound the call for a meeting of the court, and when the people were assembled he named men to go out to every quarter from the town, by sea and land, to search for Hrorek. Thorer Lange took a boat, and set off with thirty men; and when day dawned they saw two small boats before them in the channel, and when they saw each other both parties rowed as hard as they could. King Hrorek was there with thirty men. When they came quite close to each other Hrorek and his men turned towards the land, and all sprang on shore except the king, who sat on the aft seat. He bade them farewell, and wished they might meet each other again in better luck. At the

same moment Thorer with his company rowed to the land. Fin the Little shot off an arrow, which hit Thorer in the middle of the body, and was his death; and Sigurd Hit, with his men, ran up into the forest. Thorer's men took his body, and transported it, together with Hrorek, to Tunsberg. King Olaf undertook himself thereafter to look after King Hrorek, made him be carefully guarded, and took good care of his treason, for which reason he had a watch over him night and day. King Hrorek thereafter was very gay, and nobody could observe but that he was in every way well satisfied.

85. OF HROREK'S ASSAULT.

It happened on Ascension-day that King Olaf went to high mass, and the bishop went in procession around the church, and conducted the king; and when they came back to the church the bishop led the king to his seat on the north side of the choir. There Hrorek sat next to the king, and concealed his countenance in his upper cloak. When Olaf had seated himself Hrorek laid his hand on the king's shoulder, and felt it.

"Thou hast fine clothes on, cousin, today," said he.

King Olaf replies, "It is a festival today, in remembrance that Jesus Christ ascended to heaven from earth."

King Hrorek says, "I understand nothing about it so as to hold in my mind what ye tell me about Christ. Much of what ye tell me appears to me incredible, although many wonderful things may have come to pass in old times."

When the mass was finished Olaf stood up, held his hands up over his head, and bowed down before the altar, so that his cloak hung down behind his shoulders. Then King Hrorek started up hastily and sharply, and struck at the king with a long knife of the kind called *ryting*; but the blow was received in the upper cloak at the shoulder, because the king was bending himself forwards. The clothes were much cut, but the king was not wounded. When the king perceived the attack he sprang upon the floor; and Hrorek struck at him again with the knife, but did not reach him, and said, "Art thou flying, Olaf, from me, a blind men?" The king ordered his men to seize him and lead him out of the church, which was done. After this attempt many hastened to King Olaf, and advised that King Hrorek should be killed. "It is," said they, "tempting your luck in the highest degree, king, to keep him with you, and protect him, whatever mischief he may undertake; for night and day he thinks upon taking your life. And if you send him away, we know no one who can watch him so that he will not in all probability escape; and if once he gets loose he will assemble a great multitude, and do much evil."

The king replies, "You say truly that many a one has suffered death for less offence than Hrorek's; but willingly I would not darken the victory I gained over the Upland kings, when in one morning hour I took five kings prisoners, and got all their kingdoms: but yet, as they were my relations, I should not be their murderer but upon need. As yet I can scarcely see whether Hrorek puts me in the necessity of killing him or not."

It was to feel if King Olaf had armour on or not that Hrorek had laid his hand on the king's shoulder.

86. KING HROREK'S JOURNEY TO ICELAND.

There was an Iceland man, by name Thorarin Nefulfson, who had his relations in the north of the country. He was not of high birth, but particularly prudent, eloquent, and agreeable in conversation with people of distinction. He was also a far-travelled man, who had been long in foreign parts. Thorarin was a remarkably ugly man, principally because he had very ungainly limbs. He had great ugly hands, and his feet were still uglier. Thorarin was in Tunsberg when this event happened which has just been related, and he was known to King Olaf by their having had conversations together. Thorarin was just then done with rigging out a merchant vessel which he owned, and with which he intended to go to Iceland in summer. King Olaf had Thorarin with him as a guest for some days, and conversed much with him; and Thorarin even slept in the king's lodgings. One morning early the king awoke while the others were still sleeping. The sun had newly risen in the sky, and there was much light within. The king saw that Tho-

rarin had stretched out one of his feet from under the bed-clothes, and he looked at the foot a while. In the meantime the others in the lodging awoke; and the king said to Thorarin, "I have been awake for a while, and have seen a sight which was worth seeing; and that is a man's foot so ugly that I do not think an uglier can be found in this merchant town." Thereupon he told the others to look at it, and see if it was not so; and all agreed with the king. When Thorarin observed what they were talking about, he said, "There are few things for which you cannot find a match, and that may be the case here."

The king says, "I would rather say that such another ugly foot cannot be found in the town, and I would lay any wager upon it."

Then said Thorarin, "I am willing to bet that I shall find an uglier foot still in the town."

The king—"Then he who wins shall have the right to get any demand from the other he chooses to make."

"Be it so," said Thorarin. Thereupon he stretches out his other foot from under the bed-clothes, and it was in no way handsomer than the other, and moreover, wanted the little toe. "There," said Thorarin, "see now, king, my other foot, which is so much uglier; and, besides, has no little toe. Now I have won."

The king replies, "That other foot was so much uglier than this one by having five ugly toes upon it, and this has only four; and now I have won the choice of asking something from thee."

"The sovereign's decision must be right," says Thorarin; "but what does the king require of me?"

"To take Hrorek," said the king, "to Greenland, and deliver him to Leif Eirikson."

Thorarin replies, "I have never been in Greenland."

The king—"Thou, who art a far-travelled man, wilt now have an opportunity of seeing Greenland, if thou hast never been there before."

At first Thorarin did not say much about it; but as the king insisted on his wish he did not entirely decline, but said, "I will let you hear, king, what my desire would have been had I gained the wager. It would have been to be received into your body of court-men; and if you will grant me that, I will be the more zealous now in fulfilling your pleasure." The king gave his consent, and Thorarin was made one of the court-men. Then Thorarin rigged out his vessel, and when he was ready he took on board King Hrorek. When Thorarin took leave of King Olaf, he said, "Should it now turn out, king, as is not improbable, and often happens, that we cannot effect the voyage to Greenland, but must run for Iceland or other countries, how shall I get rid of this king in a way that will be satisfactory to you?"

The king—"If thou comest to Iceland, deliver him into the hands of Gudmund Eyolfson, or of Skapte, the lagman, or of some other chief who will receive my tokens and message of friendship. But if thou comest to other countries nearer to this, do so with him that thou canst know with certainty that King Hrorek never again shall appear in Norway; but do so only when thou seest no other way of doing whatsoever."

When Thorarin was ready for sea, and got a wind, he sailed outside of all the rocks and islands, and when he was to the north of the Naze set right out into the ocean. He did not immediately get a good wind, but he avoided coming near the land. He sailed until he made land which he knew, in the south part of Iceland, and sailed west around the land out into the Greenland ocean.

There he encountered heavy storms, and drove long about upon the ocean; but when summer was coming to an end he landed again in Iceland in Breidafjord. Thorgils Arason was the first man of any consequence who came to him. Thorarin brings him the king's salutation, message, and tokens, with which was the desire about King Hrorek's reception. Thorgils received these in a friendly way, and invited King Hrorek to his house, where he stayed all winter. But he did not like being there, and begged that Thorgils would let him go to Gudmund; saying he had heard some time or other that there in Gudmund's house, was the most sumptuous way of living in Iceland, and that it was intended he should be in Gudmund's hands. Thorgils let him have his desire, and conducted him with some men to Gudmund at Modruvellir. Gudmund received Hrorek kindly on account of the king's message, and he stayed there the next winter. He did not like being

there either; and then Gudmund gave him a habitation upon a small farm called Kalfskin, where there were but few neighbours. There Hrorek passed the third winter, and said that since he had laid down his kingdom he thought himself most comfortably situated here; for here he was most respected by all. The summer after Hrorek fell sick, and died; and it is said he is the only king whose bones rest in Iceland. Thorarin Nefulfson was afterwards for a long time upon voyages; but sometimes he was with King Olaf.

87. BATTLE IN ULFREKS-FJORD.

The summer that Thorarin went with Hrorek to Iceland, Hjalte Skeggjason went also to Iceland, and King Olaf gave him many friendly gifts with him when they parted. The same summer Eyvind Urarhorn went on an expedition to the west sea, and came in autumn to Ireland, to the Irish king Konofogor. In autumn Einar earl of Orkney and this Irish king met in Ulfreks-fjord, and there was a great battle, in which Konofogor gained the victory, having many more people. The earl fled with a single ship and came back about autumn to Orkney, after losing most of his men and all the booty they had made. The earl was much displeased with his expedition, and threw the blame upon the Northmen, who had been in the battle on the side of the Irish king, for making him lose the victory.

88. OLAF PREPARES FOR HIS BRIDAL JOURNEY.

Now we begin again our story where we let it slip—at King Olaf's travelling to his bridal, to receive his betrothed Ingegerd the king's daughter. The king had a great body of men with him, and so chosen a body that all the great people he could lay hold of followed him; and every man of consequence had a chosen band of men with him distinguished by birth or other qualifications. The whole were well appointed, and equipped in ships, weapons, and clothes. They steered the fleet eastwards to Konungahella; but when they arrived there they heard nothing of the Swedish king and none of his men had come there. King Olaf remained a long time in summer (A.D. 1018) at Konungahella, and endeavored carefully to make out what people said of the Swedish king's movements, or what were his designs; but no person could tell him anything for certain about it. Then he sent men up to Gautland to Earl Ragnvald, to ask him if he knew how it came to pass that the Swedish king did not come to the meeting agreed on. The earl replies, that he did not know. "But as soon," said he, "as I hear, I shall send some of my men to King Olaf, to let him know if there be any other cause for the delay than the multitude of affairs; as it often happens that the Swedish king's movements are delayed by this more than he could have expected."

89. OF THE SWEDISH KING'S CHILDREN.

This Swedish king, Olaf Eirikson, had first a concubine who was called Edla, a daughter of an earl of Vindland, who had been captured in war, and therefore was called the king's slave-girl. Their children were Emund, Astrid, Holmfrid.... They had, besides, a son, who was born the day before St. Jacob's-day. When the boy was to be christened the bishop called him Jacob, which the Swedes did not like, as there never had been a Swedish king called Jacob. All King Olaf's children were handsome in appearance, and clever from childhood. The queen was proud, and did not behave well towards her step-children; therefore the king sent his son Emund to Vindland, to be fostered by his mother's relations, where he for a long time neglected his Christianity. The king's daughter, Astrid, was brought up in West Gautland, in the house of a worthy man called Egil. She was a very lovely girl: her words came well into her conversation; she was merry, but modest, and very generous. When she was grown up she was often in her father's house, and every man thought well of her. King Olaf was haughty and harsh in his speech. He took very ill the uproar and clamour the country people had raised against him at the Upsala Thing, as they had threatened him with violence, for which he laid the chief blame on Earl Ragnvald. He made no preparation for the bridal, according to the agreement to marry his daughter

Ingegerd to Olaf the king of Norway, and to meet him on the borders for that purpose. As the summer advanced many of his men were anxious to know what the king's intentions were; whether to keep to the agreement with King Olaf, or break his word, and with it the peace of the country. But no one was so bold as to ask the king, although they complained of it to Ingegerd, and besought her to find out what the king intended. She replied "I have no inclination to speak to the king again about the matters between him and King Olaf; for he answered me ill enough once before when I brought forward Olaf's name." In the meantime Ingegerd, the king's daughter, took it to heart, became melancholy and sorrowful and yet very curious to know what the king intended. She had much suspicion that he would not keep his word and promise to King Olaf; for he appeared quite enraged whenever Olaf the Thick's name was in any way mentioned.

90. OF THE SWEDISH KING OLAF'S HUNTING.

One morning early the king rode out with his dogs and falcons, and his men around him. When they let slip the falcons the king's falcon killed two black-cocks in one flight, and three in another. The dogs ran and brought the birds when they had fallen to the ground. The king ran after them, took the game from them himself, was delighted with his sport, and said, "It will be long before the most of you have such success." They agreed in this; adding, that in their opinion no king had such luck in hunting as he had. Then the king rode home with his followers in high spirits. Ingegerd, the king's daughter, was just going out of her lodging when the king came riding into the yard, and she turned round and saluted him. He saluted her in return, laughing; produced the birds, and told her the success of his chase.

"Dost thou know of any king," said he, "who made so great a capture in so short a time?"

"It is indeed," replied she, "a good morning's hunting, to have got five black-cocks; but it was a still better when, in one morning, the king of Norway, Olaf, took five kings, and subdued all their kingdoms."

When the king heard this he sprang from his horse, turned to Ingegerd, and said, "Thou shalt know, Ingegerd, that however great thy love may be for this man, thou shalt never get him, nor he get thee. I will marry thee to some chief with whom I can be in friendship; but never can I be a friend of the man who has robbed me of my kingdom, and done me great mischief by marauding and killing through the land." With that their conversation broke off, and each went away.

91. OLAF THE NORWAY KING'S COUNSELS.

Ingegerd, the king's daughter, had now full certainty of King Olaf's intention, and immediately sent men to West Gautland to Earl Ragnvald, and let him know how it stood with the Swedish king, and that the agreement made with the king of Norway was broken; and advising the earl and people of West Gautland to be upon their guard, as no peace from the people of Norway was to be expected. When the earl got this news he sent a message through all his kingdom, and told the people to be cautious, and prepared in case of war or pillage from the side of Norway. He also sent men to King Olaf the Thick, and let him know the message he had received, and likewise that he wished for himself to hold peace and friendship with King Olaf; and therefore he begged him not to pillage in his kingdom. When this message came to King Olaf it made him both angry and sorry; and for some days nobody got a word from him. He then held a House-Thing with his men, and in it Bjorn arose, and first took the word. He began his speech by telling that he had proceeded eastward last winter to establish a peace, and he told how kindly Earl Ragnvald had received him; and, on the other hand, how crossly and heavily the Swedish king had accepted the proposal. "And the agreement," said he, "which was made, was made more by means of the strength of the people, the power of Thorgny, and the aid of the earl, than by the king's good-will. Now, on these grounds, we know for certain that it is the king who has caused the breach of the agreement; therefore

we ought by no means to make the earl suffer, for it is proved that he is King Olaf's firm friend." The king wished now to hear from the chiefs and other leaders of troops what course he should adopt. "Whether shall we go against Gautland, and maraud there with such men as we have got; or is there any other course that appears to you more advisable?" He spoke both long and well.

Thereafter many powerful men spoke, and all were at last agreed in dissuading from hostilities. They argued thus:—"Although we are a numerous body of men who are assembled here, yet they are all only people of weight and power; but, for a war expedition, young men who are in quest of property and consideration are more suitable. It is also the custom of people of weight and power, when they go into battle or strife, to have many people with them whom they can send out before them for their defence; for the men do not fight worse who have little property, but even better than those who are brought up in the midst of wealth." After these considerations the king resolved to dismiss this army from any expedition, and to give every man leave to return home; but proclaimed, at the same time, that next summer the people over the whole country would be called out in a general levy, to march immediately against the Swedish king, and punish him for his want of faith. All thought well of this plan. Then the king returned northwards to Viken, and took his abode at Sarpsborg in autumn, and ordered all things necessary for winter provision to be collected there; and he remained there all winter (A.D. 1019) with a great retinue.

92. SIGVAT THE SKALD'S JOURNEY EASTWARDS.

People talked variously about Earl Ragnvald; some said he was King Olaf's sincere friend; others did not think this likely, and thought it stood in his power to warn the Swedish king to keep his word, and the agreement concluded on between him and King Olaf. Sigvat the poet often expressed himself in conversation as Earl Ragnvald's great friend, and often spoke of him to King Olaf; and he offered to the king to travel to Earl Ragnvald's and spy after the Swedish king's doings, and to attempt, if possible, to get the settlement of the agreement. The king thought well of this plan; for he oft, and with pleasure, spoke to his confidential friends about Ingegerd, the king's daughter. Early in winter (A.D. 1019) Sigvat the skald, with two companions, left Sarpsborg, and proceeded eastwards over the moors to Gautland. Before Sigvat and King Olaf parted he composed these verses:—

Sit happy in thy hall, O king!
Till I come back, and good news bring:
The skald will bid thee now farewell,
Till he brings news well worth to tell.
He wishes to the helmed hero
Health, and long life, and a tuff flow
Of honour, riches, and success—
And, parting, ends his song with this.
The farewell word is spoken now—
The word that to the heart lies nearest;
And yet, O king! before I go,
One word on what I hold the dearest,
I fain would say, "O! may God save
To thee the bravest of the brave,
The land, which is thy right by birth!"
This is my dearest with on earth.

Then they proceeded eastwards towards Eid, and had difficulty in crossing the river in a little cobble; but they escaped, though with danger: and Sigvat sang:—

On shore the crazy boat I drew,
Wet to the skin, and frightened too;
For truly there was danger then;
The mocking hill elves laughed again.
To see us in this cobbly sailing,
And all our sea-skill unavailing.
But better did it end, you see,
Than any of us could foresee.

Then they went through the Eid forest, and Sigvat sang:—

A hundred miles through Eid's old wood,
And devil an alehouse, bad or good,—
A hundred miles, and tree and sky
Were all that met the weary eye.
With many a grumble, many a groan.

A hundred miles we trudged right on;
And every king's man of us bore
On each foot-sole a bleeding sore.

They came then through Gautland, and in the evening reached a farm-house called Hof. The door was bolted so that they could not come in; and the servants told them it was a fast-day, and they could not get admittance. Sigvat sang:—

Now up to Hof in haste I hie,
And round the house and yard I pry.
Doors are fast locked—but yet within,
Methinks, I hear some stir and din.
I peep, with nose close to the ground.
Below the door, but small cheer found.
My trouble with few words was paid—
"Tis holy time," the house-folk said.
Heathens! to shove me thus away!
I' the foul fiend's claws may you all lay.

Then they came to another farm, where the good-wife was standing at the door, and told them not to come in, for they were busy with a sacrifice to the elves. Sigvat sang of it thus:—

'My poor lad, enter not, I pray!'
Thus to me did the old wife say;
'For all of us are heathens here,
And I for Odin's wrath do fear.'
The ugly witch drove me away,
Like scared wolf sneaking from his prey.
When she told me that there within
Was sacrifice to foul Odin.

Another evening, they came to three bondes, all of them of the name of Olver, who drove them away. Sigvat sang:—

Three of one name,
To their great shame,
The traveller late
Drove from their gate!
Travellers may come
From our viking-home,
Unbidden guests
At these Olvers' feasts.

They went on farther that evening, and came to a fourth bonde, who was considered the most hospitable man in the country; but he drove them away also. Then Sigvat sang:—

Then on I went to seek night's rest
From one who was said to be the best,
The kindest host in the land around,
And there I hoped to have quarters found.
But, faith, 'twas little use to try;
For not so much as raise an eye
Would this huge wielder of the spade:
If he's the hest, it must be said
Bad is the best, and the skald's praise
Cannot be given to churls like these.
I almost wished that Asta's son
In the Eid forest had been one
When we, his men, were even put
Lodging to crave in a heathen's hut.
I knew not where the earl to find;
Four times driven off by men unkind,
I wandered now the whole night o'er,
Driven like a dog from door to door.

Now when they came to Earl Ragnvald's the earl said they must have had a severe journey. Then Sigvat sang:—

The message-bearers of the king
From Norway came his words to bring;
And truly for their master they
Hard work have done before to-day.
We did not loiter on the road,
But on we pushed for thy abode:
Thy folk, in sooth, were not so kind
That we cared much to lag behind.
But Eid to rest safe we found,
From robbers free to the eastern bound:
This praise to thee, great earl, is due—
The skald says only what is true.

Earl Ragnvald gave Sigvat a gold arm-ring, and a woman said "he had not made the journey with his black eyes for nothing." Sigvat sang:—

My coal-black eyes
Dost thou despise?
They have lighted me
Across the sea

To gain this golden prize:
They have lighted me,
Thy eyes to see,
O'er Iceland's main,
O'er hill and plain:
Where Nanna's lad would fear to be
They have lighted me.

Sigvat was long entertained kindly and well in the house of Earl Ragnvald. The earl heard by letters, sent by Ingegerd the king's daughter, that ambassadors from King Jarisleif were come from Russia to King Olaf of Svithjod to ask his daughter Ingegerd in marriage, and that King Olaf had given them hopes that he would agree to it. About the same time King Olaf's daughter Astrid came to Earl Ragnvald's court, and a great feast was made for her. Sigvat soon became acquainted by conversation with the king's daughter, and she knew him by name and family, for Ottar the skald, Sigvat's sister's son, had long intimate acquaintance with King Olaf, the Swedish king. Among other things talked of, Earl Ragnvald asked Sigvat if the king of Norway would not marry the king's daughter Astrid. "If he would do that," said he, "I think we need not ask the Swedish king for his consent." Astrid, the king's daughter, said exactly the same. Soon after Sigvat returns home, and comes to King Olaf at Sarpsborg a little before Yule.

When Sigvat came home to King Olaf he went into the hall, and, looking around on the walls, he sang:—

When our men their arms are taking
The raven's wings with greed are shaking;
When they come back to drink in hall
Brave spoil they bring to deck the wall—
Shield, helms, and panzers, all in row,
Stripped in the field from lifeless fow.
In truth no royal nail comes near
Thy splendid hall in precious gear.

Afterwards Sigvat told of his journey, and sang these verses:—

The king's court-guards desire to hear
About our journey and our cheer,
Our ships in autumn reach the sound,
But long the way to Swedish ground.
With joyless weather, wind and rain,
And pinching cold, and feet in pain—
With sleep, fatigue, and want oppressed,
No songs had we—we scarce had rest.

And when he came into conversation with the king he sang:—

When first I met the earl I told
How our king loved a friend so bold;
How in his heart he loved a man
With hand to do, and head to plan.
Thou generous king! with zeal and care
I sought to advance thy great affair;
For messengers from Russian land
Had come to ask Ingegerd's hand.
The earl, thy friend, bids thee, who art
So mild and generous of heart,
His servants all who here may come
To cherish in thy royal home;
And thine who may come to the east
In Ragnvald's hall shall find a feast—
In Ragnvald's house shall find a home—
At Ragnvald's court be still welcome.
When first I came the people's mind
Incensed by Eirik's son I find;
And he refused the wish to meet,
Alleging treachery and deceit.
But I explained how it was here,
For earl and king, advantage clear
With thee to hold the strictest peace,
And make all force and foray cease.
The earl is wise, and understands
The need of peace for both the lands;
And he entreats thee not to break
The present peace for vengeance's sake!

He immediately tells King Olaf the news he had heard; and at first the king was much cast down when he heard of King Jarisleif's suit, and he said he expected nothing but evil from King Olaf; but wished he might be able to return it in such a way as Olaf should remember. A while afterwards the king asks Sigvat about various news from Gautland. Sigvat spoke a great deal about Astrid, the king's daughter; how beautiful she was, how agreeable in her conversation; and that all declared she was in no respect behind her sister Ingegerd. The king listened with pleasure

to this. Then Sigvat told him the conversation he and Astrid had had between themselves, and the king was delighted at the idea. "The Swedish king," said he, "will scarcely think that I will dare to marry a daughter of his without his consent." But this speech of his was not known generally. King Olaf and Sigvat the skald often spoke about it. The king inquired particularly of Sigvat what he knew about Earl Ragnvald, and "if he be truly our friend," said the king. Sigvat said that the earl was King Olaf's best friend, and sang these verses:—

The mighty Olaf should not cease
With him to hold good terms and peace;
For this good earl unwearied shows
He is thy friend where all are foes.
Of all who dwell by the East Sea
So friendly no man is as he:
At all their Things he takes thy part,
And is thy firm friend, hand and heart.

93. RAGNVALD AND ASTRA'S JOURNEY.

After Yule (A.D. 1019), Thord Skotakol, a sister's son of Sigvat, attended by one of Sigvat's footboys, who had been with Sigvat the autumn before in Gautland, went quite secretly from the court, and proceeded to Gautland. When they came to Earl Ragnvald's court, they produced the tokens which Olaf himself had sent to the earl, that he might place confidence in Thord. Without delay the earl made himself ready for a journey, as did Astrid, the king's daughter; and the earl took with him 120 men, who were chosen both from among his courtmen and the sons of great bondes, and who were carefully equipped in all things, clothes, weapons, and horses. Then they rode northwards to Sarpsborg, and came there at Candlemas.

94. OF KING OLAF'S MARRIAGE.

King Olaf had put all things in order in the best style. There were all sorts of liquors of the best that could be got, and all other preparations of the same quality. Many people of consequence were summoned in from their residences. When the earl arrived with his retinue the king received him particularly well; and the earl was shown to a large, good, and remarkably well-furnished house for his lodging; and serving-men and others were appointed to wait on him; and nothing was wanting, in any respect, that could grace a feast. Now when the entertainment had lasted some days, the king, the earl, and Astrid had a conference together; and the result of it was, that Earl Ragnvald contracted Astrid, daughter of the Swedish king Olaf, to Olaf king of Norway, with the same dowry which had before been settled that her sister Ingegerd should have from home. King Olaf, on his part, should give Astrid the same bride-gift that had been intended for her sister Ingegerd. Thereupon an eke was made to the feast, and King Olaf and Queen Astrid's wedding was drunk in great festivity. Earl Ragnvald then returned to Gautland, and the king gave the earl many great and good gifts at parting; and they parted the dearest of friends, which they continued to be while they lived.

95. THE AGREEMENT BROKEN BY OLAF.

The spring (A.D. 1019) thereafter came ambassadors from King Jarisleif in Novgorod to Svithjod, to treat more particularly about the promise given by King Olaf the preceding summer to marry his daughter Ingegerd to King Jarisleif. King Olaf talked about the business with Ingegerd, and told her it was his pleasure that she should marry King Jarisleif. She replied. "If I marry King Jarisleif, I must have as my bride-gift the town and earldom of Ladoga." The Russian ambassadors agreed to this, on the part of their sovereign. Then said Ingegerd, "If I go east to Russia, I must choose the man in Svithjod whom I think most suitable to accompany me; and I must stipulate that he shall not have any less title, or in any respect less dignity, privilege, and consideration there, than he has, here." This the king and the ambassadors agreed to, and gave their hands upon it in confirmation of the condition.

"And who," asked the king, "is the man thou wilt take with thee as thy attendant?"

"That man," she replied, "is my relation Earl Ragnvald."

The king replies, "I have resolved to reward Earl Ragnvald in a different manner for his treason against his master in going to

Norway with my daughter, and giving her as a concubine to that fellow, who he knew was my greatest enemy. I shall hang him up this summer."

Then Ingegerd begged her father to be true to the promise he had made her, and had confirmed by giving his hand upon it. By her entreaties it was at last agreed that the king should promise to let Earl Ragnvald go in peace from Svithjod, but that he should never again appear in the king's presence, or come back to Svithjod while Olaf reigned. Ingegerd then sent messengers to the earl to bring him these tidings, and to appoint a place of meeting. The earl immediately prepared for his journey; rode up to East Gautland; procured there a vessel, and, with his retinue, joined Ingegerd, and they proceeded together eastward to Russia. There Ingegerd was married to King Jarisleif; and their children were Valdemar, Vissivald, and Holte the Bold. Queen Ingegerd gave Earl Ragnvald the town of Ladoga, and earldom belonging to it. Earl Ragnvald was there a long time, and was a celebrated man. His sons and Ingebjorg's were Earl Ulf and Earl Eilif.

96. HISTORY OF THE LAGMAN EMUND.

There was a man called Emund of Skara, who was lagman of west Gautland, and was a man of great understanding and eloquence, and of high birth, great connection, and very wealthy; but was considered deceitful, and not to be trusted. He was the most powerful man in West Gautland after the earl was gone. The same spring (A.D. 1019) that Earl Ragnvald left Gautland the Gautland people held a Thing among themselves, and often expressed their anxiety to each other about what the Swedish king might do. They heard he was incensed because they had rather held in friendship with the king of Norway than striven against him; and he was also enraged against those who had attended his daughter Astrid to Norway. Some proposed to seek help and support from the king of Norway, and to offer him their services; others dissuaded from this measure, as West Gautland had no strength to oppose to the Swedes. "And the king of Norway," said they, "is far from us, the chief strength of his country very distant; and therefore let us first send men to the Swedish king to attempt to come to some reconciliation with him. If that fail, we can still turn to the king of Norway." Then the bondes asked Emund to undertake this mission, to which he agreed; and he proceeded with thirty men to East Gautland, where there were many of his relations and friends, who received him hospitably. He conversed there with the most prudent men about this difficult business; and they were all unanimous on one point,—that the king's treatment of them was against law and reason. From thence Emund went into Svithjod, and conversed with many men of consequence, who all expressed themselves in the same way. Emund continued his journey thus, until one day, towards evening, he arrived at Upsala, where he and his retinue took a good lodging, and stayed there all night. The next day Emund waited upon the king, who was just then sitting in the Thing surrounded by many people. Emund went before him, bent his knee, and saluted him. The king looked at him, saluted him, and asked him what news he brought.

Emund replies, "There is little news among us Gautlanders; but it appears to us a piece of remarkable news that the proud, stupid Atte, in Vermaland, whom we look upon as a great sportsman, went up to the forest in winter with his snow-shoes and his bow. After he had got as many furs in the mountains as filled his hand-sledge so full that he could scarcely drag it, he returned home from the woods. But on the way he saw a squirrel in the trees, and shot at it, but did not hit; at which he was so angry, that he left the sledge to run after the squirrel: but still the squirrel sprang where the wood was thickest, sometimes among the roots of the trees, sometimes in the branches, sometimes among the arms that stretch from tree to tree. When Atte shot at it the arrows flew too high or too low, and the squirrel never jumped so that Atte could get a fair aim at him. He was so eager upon this chase that he ran the whole day after the squirrel, and yet could not get hold of it. It was now getting dark; so he threw himself down upon the snow, as he was wont, and lay there all night in a heavy snow-storm. Next day Atte got up to look after his sledge, but never did he find it again; and so he returned home. And this is the only news, king,

I have to tell."

The king says, "This is news of but little importance, if it be all thou hast to tell."

Emund replies, "Lately something happened which may well be called news. Gaute Tofason went with five warships out of the Gaut river, and when he was lying at the Eikrey Isles there came five large Danish merchant-ships there. Gaute and his men immediately took four of the great vessels, and made a great booty without the loss of a man: but the fifth vessel slipped out to sea, and sailed away. Gaute gave chase with one ship, and at first came nearer to them; but as the wind increased, the Danes got away. Then Gaute wanted to turn back; but a storm came on so that he lost his ship at Hlsey, with all the goods, and the greater part of his crew. In the meantime his people were waiting for him at the Eikrey Isles: but the Danes came over in fifteen merchant-ships, killed them all, and took all the booty they had made. So but little luck had they with their greed of plunder."

The king replied, "That is great news, and worth being told; but what now is thy errand here?"

Emund replies, "I travel, sire, to obtain your judgment in a difficult case, in which our law and the Upsala law do not agree."

The king asks, "What is thy appeal case?"

Emund replies, "There were two noble-born men of equal birth, but unequal in property and disposition. They quarrelled about some land, and did each other much damage; but most was done to him who was the more powerful of the two. This quarrel, however, was settled, and judged of at a General Thing; and the judgment was, that the most powerful should pay a compensation. But at the first payment, instead of paying a goose, he paid a gosling; for an old swine he paid a sucking pig; and for a mark of stamped gold only a half-mark, and for the other half-mark nothing but clay and dirt; and, moreover, threatened, in the most violent way, the people whom he forced to receive such goods in payment. Now, sire, what is your judgment?"

The king replies, "He shall pay the full equivalent whom the judgment ordered to do so, and that faithfully; and further, three-fold to his king; and if payment be not made within a year and a day, he shall be cut off from all his property, his goods confiscated, and half go the king's house, and half to the other party."

Emund took witnesses to this judgment among the most considerable of the men who were present, according to the laws which were held in the Upsala Thing. He then saluted the king, and went his way; and other men brought their cases before the king, and he sat late in the day upon the cases of the people. Now when the king came to table, he asked where Lagman Emund was. It was answered, he was home at his lodgings. "Then," said the king, "go after him, and tell him to be my guest to-day." Thereafter the dishes were borne in; then came the musicians with harps, fiddles, and musical instruments; and lastly, the cup-bearers. The king was particularly merry, and had many great people at table with him, so that he thought little of Emund. The king drank the whole day, and slept all the night after; but in the morning the king awoke, and recollected what Emund had said the day before: and when he had put on his clothes, he let his wise men be summoned to him; for he had always twelve of the wisest men who sat in judgment with him, and treated the more difficult cases; and that was no easy business, for the king was ill-pleased if the judgment was not according to justice, and yet it was of no use to contradict him. In this meeting the king ordered Lagman Emund to be called before them. The messenger returned, and said, "Sire, Lagman Emund rode away yesterday as soon as he had dined." "Then," said the king, "tell me, ye good chiefs, what may have been the meaning of that law-case which Emund laid before us yesterday?"

They replied, "You must have considered it yourself, if you think there was any other meaning under it than what he said."

The king replied, "By the two noble-born men whom he spoke of, who were at variance, and of whom one was more powerful than the other, and who did each other damage, he must have meant us and Olaf the Thick."

They answered, "It is, sire, as you say."

The king—"Our case was judged at the Upsala Thing. But what was his meaning when he said that bad payment was made;

namely, a gosling for a goose, a pig for a swine, and clay and dirt for half of the money instead of gold?"

Arnvid the Blind replied, "Sire, red gold and clay are things very unlike; but the difference is still greater between king and slave. You promised Olaf the Thick your daughter Ingegerd, who, in all branches of her descent, is born of kings, and of the Upland Swedish race of kings, which is the most noble in the North; for it is traced up to the gods themselves. But now Olaf has got Astrid; and although she is a king's child, her mother was but a slave-woman, and, besides, of Vindish race. Great difference, indeed, must there be between these kings, when the one takes thankfully such a match; and now it is evident, as might be expected, that no Northman is to be placed by the side of the Upsala kings. Let us all give thanks that it has so turned out; for the gods have long protected their descendants, although many now neglect this faith."

There were three brothers:—Arnvid the Blind, who had a great understanding, but was so weak-sighted that he was scarcely fit for war; the second was Thorvid the Stammerer, who could not utter two words together at one time, but was remarkably bold and courageous; the third was Freyvid the Deaf, who was hard of hearing. All these brothers were rich and powerful men, of noble birth, great wisdom, and all very dear to the king.

Then said King Olaf, "What means that which Emund said about Atte the Dull?"

None made any reply, but the one looked at the other.

"Speak freely," said the king.

Then said Thorvid the Stammerer, "Atte—quarrel—some—greedy—jealous—deceitful—dull."

Then said the king, "To whom are these words of reproach and mockery applied?"

Freyvid the Deaf replied, "We will speak more clearly if we have your permission."

The king—"Speak freely, Freyvid, what you will."

Freyvid took up the word, and spoke. "My brother Thorvid, who is considered to be the wisest of us brothers, holds the words 'quarrelsome, greedy, jealous, dull,' to be one and the same thing; for it applies to him who is weary of peace, longs for small things without attaining them, while he lets great and useful things pass away as they came. I am deaf; yet so loud have many spoken out, that I can perceive that all men, both great and small, take it ill that you have not kept your promise to the king of Norway; and, worse than that, that you broke the decision of the community as it was delivered at Upsala Thing. You need not fear either the king of Norway, or the king of Denmark, or any other, so long as the Swedish army will follow you; but if the people of the country unanimously turn against you, we, your friends, see no counsel that can be of advantage to you."

The king asks, "Who is the chief who dares to betray the country and me?"

Freyvid replies, "All Swedes desire to have the ancient laws, and their full rights. Look but here, sire, how many chiefs are sitting in council with you. I think, in truth, we are but six whom you call your councillors: all the others, so far as I know, have ridden forth through the districts to hold Things with the people; and we will not conceal it from you, that the message-token has gone forth to assemble a Retribution-thing. All of us brothers have been invited to take part in the decisions of this council, but none of us will bear the name of traitor to the sovereign; for that our father never was."

Then the king said, "What council shall we take in this dangerous affair that is in our hands? Good chiefs give me council, that I may keep my kingdom, and the heritage of my forefathers; for I cannot enter into strife against the whole Swedish force."

Arnvid the Blind replies, "Sire, it is my advice that you ride down to Aros with such men as will follow you; take your ship there and go out into the Maeler lake; summon all people to meet you; proceed no longer with haughtiness, but promise every man the law and rights of old established in the country; keep back in this way the message-token, for it cannot as yet, in so short a time have travelled far through the land. Send, then those of your men in whom you have the most confidence to those who have this business on hand, and try if this uproar can be appeased."

The king says that he will adopt this advice. "I will," says he, "that ye brothers undertake this business; for I trust to you the most among my men."

Thorvid the Stammerer said, "I remain behind. Let Jacob, your son, go with them, for that is necessary."

Then said Freyvid, "Let us do as Thorvid says: he will not leave you, and I and Arnvid must travel."

This counsel was followed. Olaf went to his ships, and set out into the Maelar lake, and many people came to him. The brothers Arnvid and Freyvid rode out to Ullaraker, and had with them the king's son Jacob; but they kept it a secret that he was there. The brothers observed that there was a great concourse and war-gathering, for the bondes held the Thing night and day. When Arnvid and Freyvid met their relations and friends, they said they would join with the people; and many agreed to leave the management of the business in the hands of the brothers. But all, as one man, declared they would no longer have King Olaf over them, and no longer suffer his unlawful proceedings, and over-weening pride which would not listen to any man's remonstrances, even when the great chiefs spoke the truth to him. When Freyvid observed the heat of the people, he saw in what a bad situation the king's cause was. He summoned the chiefs of the land to a meeting with him and addressed them thus:—"It appears to me, that if we are to depose Olaf Eirikson from his kingdom, we Swedes of the Uplands should be the leading men in it: for so it has always been, that the counsel which the Upland chiefs have resolved among themselves has always been followed by the men of the rest of the country. Our forefathers did not need to take advice from the West Gautlanders about the government of the Swedes. Now we will not be so degenerate as to need Emund to give us counsel; but let us, friends and relations, unite ourselves for the purpose of coming to a determination." All agreed to this, and thought it was well said. Thereafter the people joined this union which the Upland chiefs made among themselves, and Freyvid and Arnvid were chiefs of the whole assemblage. When Emund heard this he suspected how the matter would end, and went to both the brothers to have a conversation with them. Then Freyvid asked Emund, "Who, in your opinion, should we take for king, in case Olaf Eirikson's days are at an end?"

Emund—"He whom we think best suited to it, whether he be of the race of chiefs or not."

Freyvid answers, "We Uplanders will not, in our time, have the kingdom go out of the old race of our ancestors, which has given us kings for a long course of generations, so long as we have so good a choice as now. King Olaf has two sons, one of whom we will choose for king, although there is a great difference between them. The one is noble-born, and of Swedish race on both sides; the other is a slave-woman's son, and of Vindish race on the mother's side."

This decision was received with loud applause, and all would have Jacob for king.

Then said Emund. "Ye Upland Swedes have the power this time to determinate the matter; but I will tell you what will happen:—some of those who now will listen to nothing but that the kingdom remain in the old race will live to see the day when they will wish the kingdom in another race, as being of more advantage."

Thereupon the brothers Freyvid and Arnvid led the king's son Jacob into the Thing, and saluted him with the title of king; and the Swedes gave him the name of Onund, which he afterwards retained as long as he lived. He was then ten or twelve years old. Thereafter King Onund took a court, and chose chiefs to be around him; and they had as many attendants in their suite as were thought necessary, so that he gave the whole assemblage of bondes leave to return home. After that ambassadors went between the two kings; and at last they had a meeting, and came to an agreement. Olaf was to remain king over the country as long as he lived; but should hold peace and be reconciled with King Olaf of Norway, and also with all who had taken part in this business. Onund should also be king, and have a part of the land, such as the father and son should agree upon; but should be bound to support the bondes in case King Olaf did anything which the bondes would not suffer.

97. MEETING OF RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE KINGS, AND THEIR GAME AT DICE.

Thereafter ambassadors were sent to Norway to King Olaf, with the errand that he should come with his retinue to a meeting at Konungahella with the Swedish kings, and that the Swedish kings would there confirm their reconciliation. When King Olaf heard this message, he was willing, now as formerly, to enter into the agreement, and proceeded to the appointed place. There the Swedish kings also came; and the relations, when they met, bound themselves mutually to peace and agreement. Olaf the Swedish king was then remarkably mild in manner, and agreeable to talk with. Thorstein Frode relates of this meeting, that there was an inhabited district in Hising which had sometimes belonged to Norway, and sometimes to Gautland. The kings came to the agreement between themselves that they would cast lots by the dice to determine who should have this property, and that he who threw the highest should have the district. The Swedish king threw two sixes, and said King Olaf need scarcely throw. He replied, while shaking the dice in his hand, "Although there be two sixes on the dice, it would be easy, sire, for God Almighty to let them turn up in my favour." Then he threw, and had sixes also. Now the Swedish king threw again, and had again two sixes. Olaf king of Norway then threw, and had six upon one dice, and the other split in two, so as to make seven eyes in all upon it; and the district was adjudged to the king of Norway. We have heard nothing else of any interest that took place at this meeting; and the kings separated the dearest of friends with each other.

98. OF OLAF OF NORWAY, AFTER THE MEETING.

After the events now related Olaf returned with his people to Viken. He went first to Tunsberg, and remained there a short time, and then proceeded to the north of the country. In harvest-time he sailed north to Thronthjem, and had winter provision laid in there, and remained there all winter (A.D. 1090). Olaf Haraldson was now sole and supreme king of Norway, and the whole of that sovereignty, as Harald Harfager had possessed it, and had the advantage over that monarch of being the only king in the land. By a peaceful agreement he had also recovered that part of the country which Olaf the Swedish king had before occupied; and that part of the country which the Danish king had got he retook by force, and ruled over it as elsewhere in the country. The Danish king Canute ruled at that time both over Denmark and England; but he himself was in England for the most part, and set chiefs over the country in Denmark, without at that time making any claim upon Norway.

99. HISTORY OF THE EARLS OF ORKNEY.

It is related that in the days of Harald Harfager, the king of Norway, the islands of Orkney, which before had been only a resort for vikings, were settled. The first earl in the Orkney Islands was called Sigurd, who was a son of Eystein Giumra, and brother of Ragnvald earl of More. After Sigurd his son Guthorm was earl for one year. After him Torf-Einar, a son of Ragnvald, took the earldom, and was long earl, and was a man of great power. Halfdan Haleg, a son of Harald Harfager, assaulted Torf-Einar, and drove him from the Orkney Islands; but Einar came back and killed Halfdan in the island Ronaldsha. Thereafter King Harald came with an army to the Orkney Islands. Einar fled to Scotland, and King Harald made the people of the Orkney Islands give up their udal properties, and hold them under oath from him. Thereafter the king and earl were reconciled, so that the earl became the king's man, and took the country as a fief from him; but that it should pay no scat or feu-duty, as it was at that time much plundered by vikings. The earl paid the king sixty marks of gold; and then King Harald went to plunder in Scotland, as related in the "Glym Drapa". After Torf-Einar, his sons Arnkel, Erlend, and Thorfin Hausakljufer ruled over these lands. In their days came Eirik Blood-axe from Norway, and subdued these earls. Arnkel and Erlend fell in a war expedition; but Thorfin ruled the country long, and became an

old man. His sons were Arnfin, Havard, Hlodver, Liot, and Skule. Their mother was Grelad, a daughter of Earl Dunga of Caithness. Her mother was Groa, a daughter of Thorstein Raud. In the latter days of Earl Thorfin came Eirik Blood-axe's sons, who had fled from Earl Hakon out of Norway, and committed great excesses in Orkney. Earl Thorfin died on a bed of sickness, and his sons after him ruled over the country, and there are many stories concerning them. Hlodver lived the longest of them, and ruled alone over this country. His son was Sigurd the Thick, who took the earldom after him, and became a powerful man and a great warrior. In his days came Olaf Trygvason from his viking expedition in the western ocean, with his troops, landed in Orkney and took Earl Sigurd prisoner in South Ronaldsha, where he lay with one ship. King Olaf allowed the earl to ransom his life by letting himself be baptized, adopting the true faith, becoming his man, and introducing Christianity into all the Orkney Islands. As a hostage, King Olaf took his son, who was called Hunde or Whelp. Then Olaf went to Norway, and became king; and Hunde was several years with King Olaf in Norway, and died there. After his death Earl Sigurd showed no obedience or fealty to King Olaf. He married a daughter of the Scottish king Malcolm, and their son was called Thorfin. Earl Sigurd had, besides, older sons; namely, Sumarlíde, Bruse, and Einar Rangmund. Four or five years after Olaf Trygvason's fall Earl Sigurd went to Ireland, leaving his eldest sons to rule the country, and sending Thorfin to his mother's father, the Scottish king. On this expedition Earl Sigurd fell in Brian's battle (!). When the news was received in Orkney, the brothers Sumarlíde, Bruse, and Einar were chosen earls, and the country was divided into three parts among them. Thorfin Sigurdson was five years old when Earl Sigurd fell. When the Scottish king heard of the earl's death he gave his relation Thorfin Caithness and Sutherland, with the title of earl, and appointed good men to rule the land for him. Earl Thorfin was ripe in all ways as soon as he was grown up: he was stout and strong, but ugly; and as soon as he was a grown man it was easy to see that he was a severe and cruel but a very clever man. So says Arnor, the earls' skald:—

Under the rim of heaven no other,
So young in years as Einar's brother,
In battle had a braver hand,
Or stouter, to defend the land.

100. OF THE EARLS EINAR AND BRUSE.

The brothers Einar and Bruse were very unlike in disposition. Bruse was a soft-minded, peaceable man,—sociable, eloquent, and of good understanding. Einar was obstinate, taciturn, and dull; but ambitious, greedy of money, and withal a great warrior. Sumarlíde, the eldest of the brothers, was in disposition like Bruse, and lived not long, but died in his bed. After his death Thorfin claimed his share of the Orkney Islands. Einar replied, that Thorfin had the dominions which their father Sigurd had possessed, namely, Caithness and Sutherland, which he insisted were much larger than a third part of Orkney; therefore he would not consent to Thorfin's having any share. Bruse, on the other hand, was willing, he said, to divide with him. "I do not-desire," he said, "more than the third part of the land, and which of right belongs to me." Then Einar took possession of two parts of the country, by which he became a powerful man, surrounded by many followers. He was often in summer out on marauding expeditions, and called out great numbers of the people to join him; but it went always unpleasantly with the division of the booty made on his viking cruises. Then the bondes grew weary of all these burdens; but Earl Einar held fast by them with severity, calling in all services laid upon the people, and allowing no opposition from any man; for he was excessively proud and overbearing. And now there came dearth and scarcity in his lands, in consequence of the services and money outlay exacted from the bondes; while in the part of the country belonging to Bruse there were peace and plenty, and therefore he was the best beloved by the bondes.

101. OF THORKEL AMUNDASON.

There was a rich and powerful man who was called Amunde, who dwelt in Hrossey at Sandvik, in Hlaupandanes. His son, called Thorkel, was one of the ablest men in the islands. Amunde was

a man of the best understanding, and most respected in Orkney. One spring Earl Einar proclaimed a levy for an expedition, as usual. The bondes murmured greatly against it, and applied to Amunde with the entreaty that he would intercede with the earl for them. He replied, that the earl was not a man who would listen to other people, and insisted that it was of no use to make any entreaty to the earl about it. "As things now stand, there is a good understanding between me and the earl; but, in my opinion, there would be much danger of our quarrelling, on account of our different dispositions and views on both sides; therefore I will have nothing to do with it." They then applied to Thorkel, who was also very loath to interfere, but promised at last to do so, in consequence of the great entreaty of the people. Amunde thought he had given his promise too hastily. Now when the earl held a Thing, Thorkel spoke on account of the people, and entreated the earl to spare the people from such heavy burdens, recounting their necessitous condition. The earl replies favourably, saying that he would take Thorkel's advice. "I had intended to go out from the country with six ships, but now I will only take three with me; but thou must not come again, Thorkel, with any such request." The bondes thanked Thorkel for his assistance, and the earl set out on a viking cruise, and came back in autumn. The spring after, the earl made the same levy as usual, and held a Thing with the bondes. Then Thorkel again made a speech, in which he entreated the earl to spare the people. The earl now was angry, and said the lot of the bondes should be made worse in consequence of his intercession; and worked himself up into such a rage, that he vowed they should not both come next spring to the Thing in a whole skin. Then the Thing was closed. When Amunde heard what the earl and Thorkel had said at the Thing, he told Thorkel to leave the country, and he went over to Caithness to Earl Thorfin. Thorkel was afterwards a long time there, and brought up the earl in his youth, and was on that account called Thorkel the Fosterer; and he became a very celebrated man.

102. THE AGREEMENT OF THE EARLS.

There were many powerful men who fled from their udal properties in Orkney on account of Earl Einar's violence, and the most fled over to Caithness to Earl Thorfin: but some fled from the Orkney Islands to Norway, and some to other countries. When Earl Thorfin was grown up he sent a message to his brother Einar, and demanded the part of the dominion which he thought belonged to him in Orkney; namely, a third of the islands. Einar was nowise inclined to diminish his possessions. When Thorfin found this he collected a warforce in Caithness, and proceeded to the islands. As soon as Earl Einar heard of this he collected people, and resolved to defend his country. Earl Bruse also collected men, and went out to meet them, and bring about some agreement between them. An agreement was at last concluded, that Thorfin should have a third part of the islands, as of right belonging to him, but that Bruse and Einar should lay their two parts together, and Einar alone should rule over them; but if the one died before the other, the longest liver should inherit the whole. This agreement seemed reasonable, as Bruse had a son called Ragnvald, but Einar had no son. Earl Thorfin set men to rule over his land in Orkney, but he himself was generally in Caithness. Earl Einar was generally on viking expeditions to Ireland, Scotland, and Bretland.

103. EYVIND URARHORN'S MURDER.

One summer (A.D. 1018) that Earl Einar marauded in Ireland, he fought in Ulfreks-fjord with the Irish king Konofogor, as has been related before, and suffered there a great defeat. The summer after this (A.D. 1019) Eyvind Urarhorn was coming from the west from Ireland, intending to go to Norway; but the weather was boisterous, and the current against him, so he ran into Osmundwall, and lay there wind-bound for some time. When Earl Einar heard of this, he hastened thither with many people, took Eyvind prisoner, and ordered him to be put to death, but spared the lives of most of his people. In autumn they proceeded to Norway to King Olaf, and told him Eyvind was killed. The king said little about it, but one could see that he considered it a great and vexatious loss; for he did not usually say much if anything turned out contrary to

his wishes. Earl Thorfin sent Thorkel Fosterer to the islands to gather in his scat. Now, as Einar gave Thorkel the greatest blame for the dispute in which Thorfin had made claim to the islands, Thorkel came suddenly back to Caithness from Orkney, and told Earl Thorfin that he had learnt that Earl Einar would have murdered him if his friends and relations had not given him notice to escape. "Now," says he, "it is come so far between the earl and me, that either some thing decisive between us must take place if we meet, or I must remove to such a distance that his power will not reach me." The earl encouraged Thorkel much to go east to Norway to King Olaf. "Thou wilt be highly respected," says he, "wherever thou comest among honourable men; and I know so well thy disposition and the earl's, that it will not be long before ye come to extremities." Thereupon Thorkel made himself ready, and proceeded in autumn to Norway, and then to King Olaf, with whom he stayed the whole winter (A.D. 1020), and was in high favour. The king often entered into conversation with him, and he thought, what was true, that Thorkel was a high-minded man, of good understanding. In his conversations with Thorkel, the king found a great difference in his description of the two earls; for Thorkel was a great friend of Earl Thorfin, but had much to say against Einar. Early in spring (A.D. 1020) the king sent a ship west over the sea to Earl Thorfin, with the invitation to come east and visit him in Norway. The earl did not decline the invitation, for it was accompanied by assurances of friendship.

104. EARL EINAR'S MURDER.

Earl Thorfin went east to Norway, and came to King Olaf, from whom he received a kind reception, and stayed till late in the summer. When he was preparing to return westwards again, King Olaf made him a present of a large and fully-rigged long-ship. Thorkel the Fosterer joined company with the earl, who gave him the ship which he brought with him from the west. The king and the earl took leave of each other tenderly. In autumn Earl Thorfin came to Orkney, and when Earl Einar heard of it he went on board his ships with a numerous band of men. Earl Bruse came up to his two brothers, and endeavoured to mediate between them, and a peace was concluded and confirmed by oath. Thorkel Fosterer was to be in peace and friendship with Earl Einar; and it was agreed that each of them should give a feast to the other, and that the earl should first be Thorkel's guest at Sandwick. When the earl came to the feast he was entertained in the best manner; but the earl was not cheerful. There was a great room, in which there were doors at each end. The day the earl should depart Thorkel was to accompany him to the other feast; and Thorkel sent men before, who should examine the road they had to travel that day. The spies came back, and said to Thorkel they had discovered three ambushes. "And we think," said they, "there is deceit on foot." When Thorkel heard this he lengthened out his preparations for the journey, and gathered people about him. The earl told him to get ready, as it was time to be on horseback. Thorkel answered, that he had many things to put in order first, and went out and in frequently. There was a fire upon the floor. At last he went in at one door, followed by an Iceland man from Eastfjord, called Halvard, who locked the door after him. Thorkel went in between the fire and the place where the earl was sitting. The earl asked, "Art thou ready at last, Thorkel?"

Thorkel answers, "Now I am ready;" and struck the earl upon the head so that he fell upon the floor.

Then said the Iclander, "I never saw people so foolish as not to drag the earl out of the fire;" and took a stick, which he set under the earl's neck, and put him upright on the bench. Thorkel and his two comrades then went in all haste out of the other door opposite to that by which they went in, and Thorkel's men were standing without fully armed. The earl's men now went in, and took hold of the earl. He was already dead, so nobody thought of avenging him: and also the whole was done so quickly; for nobody expected such a deed from Thorkel, and all supposed that there really was, as before related, a friendship fixed between the earl and Thorkel. The most who were within were unarmed, and they were partly Thorkel's good friends; and to this may be added, that fate had decreed a longer life to Thorkel. When Thorkel came out he had

not fewer men with him than the earl's troop. Thorkel went to his ship, and the earl's men went their way. The same day Thorkel sailed out eastwards into the sea. This happened after winter; but he came safely to Norway, went as fast as he could to Olaf, and was well received by him. The king expressed his satisfaction at this deed, and Thorkel was with him all winter (A.D. 1091).

105. AGREEMENT BETWEEN KING OLAF AND EARL BRUSE.

After Earl Einar's fall Bruse took the part of the country which he had possessed; for it was known to many men on what conditions Einar and Bruse had entered into a partnership. Although Thorfin thought it would be more just that each of them had half of the islands, Bruse retained the two-thirds of the country that winter (A.D. 1021). In spring, however, Thorfin produced his claim, and demanded the half of the country; but Bruse would not consent. They held Things and meetings about the business; and although their friends endeavoured to settle it, Thorfin would not be content with less than the half of the islands, and insisted that Bruse, with his disposition, would have enough even with a third part. Bruse replies, "When I took my heritage after my father I was well satisfied with a third part of the country, and there was nobody to dispute it with me; and now I have succeeded to another third in heritage after my brother, according to a lawful agreement between us; and although I am not powerful enough to maintain a feud against thee, my brother, I will seek some other way, rather than willingly renounce my property." With this their meeting ended. But Bruse saw that he had no strength to contend against Thorfin, because Thorfin had both a greater dominion and also could have aid from his mother's brother, the Scottish king. He resolved, therefore, to go out of the country; and he went eastward to King Olaf, and had with him his son Ragnvald, then ten years old. When the earl came to the king he was well received. The earl now declared his errand, and told the king the circumstances of the whole dispute between him and his brother, and asked help to defend his kingdom of Orkney; promising, in return, the fullest friendship towards King Olaf. In his answer, the king began with showing how Harald Harfager had appropriated to himself all udal rights in Orkney, and that the earls, since that time, have constantly held the country as a fief, not as their udal property. "As a sufficient proof of which," said he, "when Eirik Blood-axe and his sons were in Orkney the earls were subject to them; and also when my relation Olaf Trygvason came there thy father, Earl Sigurd, became his man. Now I have taken heritage after King Olaf, and I will give thee the condition to become my man and then I will give thee the islands as a fief; and we shall try if I cannot give thee aid that will be more to the purpose than Thorfin can get from the Scottish king. If thou wilt not accept of these terms, then will I win back my udal property there in the West, as our forefathers and relations of old possessed it."

The earl carefully considered this speech, laid it before his friends, and demanded their advice if he should agree to it, and enter into such terms with King Olaf and become his vassal. "But I do not see what my lot will be at my departure if I say no; for the king has clearly enough declared his claim upon Orkney; and from his great power, and our being in his hands, it is easy for him to make our destiny what he pleases."

Although the earl saw that there was much to be considered for and against it he chose the condition to deliver himself and his dominion into the king's power. Thereupon the king took the earl's power, and the government over all the earl's lands, and the earl became his vassal under oath of fealty.

106. THE EARL'S AGREEMENT TO THE KING'S TERMS.

Thorfin the earl heard that his brother Bruse had gone east to King Olaf to seek support from him; but as Thorfin had been on a visit to King Olaf before, and had concluded a friendship with him, he thought his case would stand well with the king, and that many would support it; but he believed that many more would do so if he went there himself. Earl Thorfin resolved, therefore, to go east himself without delay; and he thought there would be so little

difference between the time of his arrival and Bruse's, that Bruse's errand could not be accomplished before he came to King Olaf. But it went otherwise than Earl Thorfin had expected; for when he came to the king the agreement between the king and Bruse was already concluded and settled, and Earl Thorfin did not know a word about Bruse's having surrendered his udal domains until he came to King Olaf. As soon as Earl Thorfin and King Olaf met, the king made the same demand upon the kingdom of Orkney that he had done to Earl Bruse, and required that Thorfin should voluntarily deliver over to the king that part of the country which he had possessed hitherto. The earl answered in a friendly and respectful way, that the king's friendship lay near to his heart: "And if you think, sire, that my help against other chiefs can be of use, you have already every claim to it; but I cannot be your vessel for service, as I am an earl of the Scottish king, and owe fealty to him."

As the king found that the earl, by his answer, declined fulfilling the demand he had made, he said, "Earl, if thou wilt not become my vassal, there is another condition; namely, that I will place over the Orkney Islands the man I please, and require thy oath that thou wilt make no claim upon these lands, but allow whoever I place over them to sit in peace. If thou wilt not accept of either of these conditions, he who is to rule over these lands may expect hostility from thee, and thou must not think it strange if like meet like in this business."

The earl begged of the king some time to consider the matter. The king did so, and gave the earl time to take the counsel of his friends on the choosing one or other of these conditions. Then the earl requested a delay until next summer, that he might go over the sea to the west, for his proper counsellors were all at home, and he himself was but a child in respect of age; but the king required that he should now make his election of one or other of the conditions. Thorkel Fosterer was then with the king, and he privately sent a person to Earl Thorfin, and told him, whatever his intentions might be, not to think of leaving Olaf without being reconciled with him, as he stood entirely in Olaf's power. From such hints the earl saw there was no other way than to let the king have his own will. It was no doubt a hard condition to have no hope of ever regaining his paternal heritage, and moreover to bind himself by oath to allow those to enjoy in peace his domain who had no hereditary right to it; but seeing it was uncertain how he could get away, he resolved to submit to the king and become his vassal, as Bruse had done. The king observed that Thorfin was more high-minded, and less disposed to suffer subjection than Bruse, and therefore he trusted less to Thorfin than to Bruse; and he considered also that Thorfin would trust to the aid of the Scottish king, if he broke the agreement. The king also had discernment enough to perceive that Bruse, although slow to enter into an agreement, would promise nothing but what he intended to keep; but as to Thorfin when he had once made up his mind he went readily into every proposal and made no attempt to obtain any alteration of the king's first conditions: therefore the king had his suspicions that the earl would infringe the agreement.

107. EARL THORFIN'S DEPARTURE, AND RECONCILIATION WITH THORKEL.

When the king had carefully considered the whole matter by himself, he ordered the signal to sound for a General Thing, to which he called in the earls. Then said the king, "I will now make known to the public our agreement with the Orkney earls. They have now acknowledged my right of property to Orkney and Shetland, and have both become my vassals, all which they have confirmed by oath; and now I will invest them with these lands as a fief: namely, Bruse with one third part and Thorfin with one third, as they formerly enjoyed them; but the other third which Einar Rangmund had, I adjudge as fallen to my domain, because he killed Eyvind Urarhorn, my court-man, partner, and dear friend; and that part of the land I will manage as I think proper. I have also my earls, to tell you it is my pleasure that ye enter into an agreement with Thorkel Amundason for the murder of your brother Einar, for I will take that business, if ye agree thereto, within my own jurisdiction." The earls agreed to this, as to everything else that the king proposed.

Thorkel came forward, and surrendered to the king's judgment of the case, and the Thing concluded. King Olaf awarded as great a penalty for Earl Einar's murder as for three lendenmen; but as Einar himself was the cause of the act, one third of the mulct fell to the ground. Thereafter Earl Thorfin asked the king's leave to depart, and as soon as he obtained it made ready for sea with all speed. It happened one day, when all was ready for the voyage, the earl sat in his ship drinking; and Thorkel Amundason came unexpectedly to him, laid his head upon the earl's knee, and bade him do with him what he pleased. The earl asked why he did so. "We are, you know, reconciled men, according to the king's decision; so stand up, Thorkel."

Thorkel replied, "The agreement which the king made as between me and Bruse stands good; but what regards the agreement with thee thou alone must determine. Although the king made conditions for my property and safe residence in Orkney, yet I know so well thy disposition that there is no going to the islands for me, unless I go there in peace with thee, Earl Thorfin; and therefore I am willing to promise never to return to Orkney, whatever the king may desire."

The earl remained silent; and first, after a long pause, he said, "If thou wilt rather, Thorkel, that I shall judge between us than trust to the king's judgment, then let the beginning of our reconciliation be, that you go with me to the Orkney Islands, live with me, and never leave me but with my will, and be bound to defend my land, and execute all that I want done, as long as we both are in life."

Thorkel replies, "This shall be entirely at thy pleasure, earl, as well as everything else in my power." Then Thorkel went on, and solemnly ratified this agreement. The earl said he would talk afterwards about the mulct of money, but took Thorkel's oath upon the conditions. Thorkel immediately made ready to accompany the earl on his voyage. The earl set off as soon as all was ready, and never again were King Olaf and Thorfin together.

108. EARL BRUSE'S DEPARTURE.

Earl Bruse remained behind, and took his time to get ready. Before his departure the king sent for him, and said, "It appears to me, earl, that in thee I have a man on the west side of the sea on whose fidelity I can depend; therefore I intend to give thee the two parts of the country which thou formerly hadst to rule over; for I will not that thou shouldst be a less powerful man after entering into my service than before: but I will secure thy fidelity by keeping thy son Ragnvald with me. I see well enough that with two parts of the country and my help, thou wilt be able to defend what is thy own against thy brother Thorfin." Bruse was thankful for getting two thirds instead of one third of the country, and soon after he set out, and came about autumn to Orkney; but Ragnvald, Bruse's son, remained behind in the East with King Olaf. Ragnvald was one of the handsomest men that could be seen,—his hair long, and yellow as silk; and he soon grew up, stout and tall, and he was a very able and superb man, both of great understanding and polite manners. He was long with King Olaf. Otter Svarte speaks of these affairs in the poem he composed about King Olaf:—

From Shetland, far off in the cold North Sea,
Come chiefs who desire to be subject to thee;
No king so well known for his will, and his might,
To defend his own people from scaith or unright.
These isles of the West midst the ocean's wild roar,
Scarcely heard the voice of their sovereign before;
Our bravest of sovereigns before could scarce bring
These islesmen so proud to acknowledge their king.

109. OF THE EARLS THORFIN AND BRUSE.

The brothers Thorfin and Bruse came west to Orkney; and Bruse took the two parts of the country under his rule, and Thorfin the third part. Thorfin was usually in Caithness and elsewhere in Scotland; but placed men of his own over the islands. It was left to Bruse alone to defend the islands, which at that time were severely scourged by vikings; for the Northmen and Danes went much on viking cruises in the west sea, and frequently touched at Orkney on the way to or from the west, and plundered, and took provisions and cattle from the coast. Bruse often complained of his brother Thorfin, that he made no equipment of war for the defence of Orkney and Shetland, yet levied his share of the scat

and duties. Then Thorfin offered to him to exchange, and that Bruse should have one third and Thorfin two thirds of the land, but should undertake the defence of the land, for the whole. Although this exchange did not take place immediately, it is related in the saga of the earls that it was agreed upon at last; and that Thorfin had two parts and Bruse only one, when Canute the Great subdued Norway and King Olaf fled the country. Earl Thorfin Sigurdson has been the ablest earl of these islands, and has had the greatest dominion of all the Orkney earls; for he had under him Orkney, Shetland, and the Hebudes, besides very great possessions in Scotland and Ireland. Arnor, the earls' skald, tells of his possessions:—

From Thurso-skerry to Dublin,
All people hold with good Thorfin—
All people love his sway,
And the generous chief obey.

Thorfin was a very great warrior. He came to the earldom at five years of age, ruled more than sixty years, and died in his bed about the last days of Harald Sigurdson. But Bruse died in the days of Canute the Great, a short time after the fall of Saint Olaf.

110. OF HAREK OF THJOTTA.

Having now gone through this second story, we shall return to that which we left,—at King Olaf Haraldson having concluded peace with King Olaf the Swedish king, and having the same summer gone north to Throndhjem. He had then been king in Norway five years (A.D. 1015-1019). In harvest time he prepared to take his winter residence at Nidaros, and he remained all winter there (A.D. 1020). Thorkel the Fosterer, Amunde's son, as before related, was all that winter with him. King Olaf inquired very carefully how it stood with Christianity throughout the land, and learnt that it was not observed at all to the north of Halogaland, and was far from being observed as it should be in Naumudal, and the interior of Throndhjem. There was a man by name Harek, a son of Eyvind Skaldaspillur, who dwelt in an island called Thjotta in Halogaland. Eyvind had not been a rich man, but was of high family and high mind. In Thjotta, at first, there dwelt many small bondes; but Harek began with buying a farm not very large and lived on it, and in a few years he had got all the bondes that were there before out of the way; so that he had the whole island, and built a large head-mansion. He soon became very rich; for he was a very prudent man, and very successful. He had long been greatly respected by the chiefs; and being related to the kings of Norway, had been raised by them to high dignities. Harek's father's mother Gunhild was a daughter of Earl Halfdan, and Ingebjorg, Harald Harfager's daughter. At the time the circumstance happened which we are going to relate he was somewhat advanced in years. Harek was the most respected man in Halogaland, and for a long time had the Lapland trade, and did the king's business in Lapland; sometimes alone, sometimes with others joined to him. He had not himself been to wait on King Olaf, but messages had passed between them, and all was on the most friendly footing. This winter (A.D. 1020) that Olaf was in Nidaros, messengers passed between the king and Harek of Thjotta. Then the king made it known that he intended going north to Halogaland, and as far north as the land's end; but the people of Halogaland expected no good from this expedition.

111. OF THE PEOPLE OF HALOGALAND.

Olaf rigged out five ships in spring (A.D. 1020), and had with him about 300 men. When he was ready for sea he set northwards along the land; and when he came to Naumudal district he summoned the bondes to a Thing, and at every Thing was accepted as king. He also made the laws to be read there as elsewhere, by which the people are commanded to observe Christianity; and he threatened every man with loss of life, and limbs, and property who would not subject himself to Christian law. He inflicted severe punishments on many men, great as well as small, and left no district until the people had consented to adopt the holy faith. The most of the men of power and of the great bondes made feasts for the king, and so he proceeded all the way north to Halogaland. Harek of Thjotta also made a feast for the king, at which there

was a great multitude of guests, and the feast was very splendid. Harek was made lenderman, and got the same privileges he had enjoyed under the former chiefs of the country.

112. OF ASMUND GRANKELSON.

There was a man called Grankel, or Granketil, who was a rich bonde, and at this time rather advanced in age. In his youth he had been on viking cruises, and had been a powerful fighter; for he possessed great readiness in all sorts of bodily exercises. His son Asmund was equal to his father in all these, and in some, indeed, he excelled him. There were many who said that with respect to comeliness, strength, and bodily expertness, he might be considered the third remarkably distinguished for these that Norway had ever produced. The first was Hakon Athelstan's foster-son; the second, Olaf Trygvason. Grankel invited King Olaf to a feast, which was very magnificent; and at parting Grankel presented the king with many honourable gifts and tokens of friendship. The king invited Asmund, with many persuasions, to follow him; and as Asmund could not decline the honours offered him, he got ready to travel with the king, became his man, and stood in high favour with him. The king remained in Halogaland the greater part of the summer, went to all the Things, and baptized all the people. Thorer Hund dwelt at that time in the island Bjarkey. He was the most powerful man in the North, and also became one of Olaf's lendermen. Many sons of great bondes resolved also to follow King Olaf from Halogaland. Towards the end of summer King Olaf left the North, and sailed back to Throndhjem, and landed at Nidaros, where he passed the winter (A.D. 1021). It was then that Thorkel the Fosterer came from the West from Orkney, after killing Einar Rangmumd, as before related. This autumn corn was dear in Throndhjem, after a long course of good seasons, and the farther north the dearer was the corn; but there was corn enough in the East country, and in the Uplands, and it was of great help to the people of Throndhjem that many had old corn remaining beside them.

113. OF THE SACRIFICES OF THE THRONDHJEM PEOPLE.

In autumn the news was brought to King Olaf that the bondes had had a great feast on the first winter-day's eve, at which there was a numerous attendance and much drinking; and it was told the king that all the remembrance-cups to the Asas, or old gods, were blessed according to the old heathen forms; and it was added, that cattle and horses had been slain, and the altars sprinkled with their blood, and the sacrifices accompanied with the prayer that was made to obtain good seasons. It was also reported that all men saw clearly that the gods were offended at the Halogaland people turning Christian. Now when the king heard this news he sent men into the Throndhjem country, and ordered several bondes, whose names he gave, to appear before him. There was a man called Olver of Eggja, so called after his farm on which he lived. He was powerful, of great family, and the head-man of those who on account of the bondes appeared before the king. Now, when they came to the king, he told them these accusations; to which Olver, on behalf of the bondes, replied, that they had had no other feasts that harvest than their usual entertainments, and social meetings, and friendly drinking parties. "But as to what may have been told you of the words which may have fallen from us Throndhjem people in our drinking parties, men of understanding would take good care not to use such language; but I cannot hinder drunken or foolish people's talk." Olver was a man of clever speech, and bold in what he said, and defended the bondes against such accusations. In the end, the king said the people of the interior of Throndhjem must themselves give the best testimony to their being in the right faith. The bondes got leave to return home, and set off as soon as they were ready.

114. OF THE SACRIFICES BY THE PEOPLE OF THE INTERIOR OF THE THRONDHJEM DISTRICT.

Afterwards, when winter was advanced, it was told the king that the people of the interior of Throndhjem had assembled in great

number at Maerin, and that there was a great sacrifice in the middle of winter, at which they sacrificed offerings for peace and a good season. Now when the king knew this on good authority to be true, he sent men and messages into the interior, and summoned the bondes whom he thought of most understanding into the town. The bondes held a council among themselves about this message; and all those who had been upon the same occasion in the beginning of winter were now very unwilling to make the journey. Olver, however, at the desire of all the bondes, allowed himself to be persuaded. When he came to the town he went immediately before the king, and they talked together. The king made the same accusation against the bondes, that they had held a mid-winter sacrifice. Olver replies, that this accusation against the bondes was false. "We had," said he, "Yule feasts and drinking feasts wide around in the districts; and the bondes do not prepare their feasts so sparingly, sire, that there is not much left over, which people consume long afterwards. At Maerin there is a great farm, with a large house on it, and a great neighbourhood all around it, and it is the great delight of the people to drink many together in company." The king said little in reply, but looked angry, as he thought he knew the truth of the matter better than it was now represented. He ordered the bondes to return home. "I shall some time or other," said he, "come to the truth of what you are now concealing, and in such a way that ye shall not be able to contradict it. But, however, that may be, do not try such things again." The bondes returned home, and told the result of their journey, and that the king was altogether enraged.

115. MURDER OF OLVER OF EGGJA.

At Easter (A.D. 1021) the king held a feast, to which he had invited many of the townspeople as well as bondes. After Easter he ordered his ships to be launched into the water, oars and tackle to be put on board, decks to be laid in the ships, and tilts and rigging to be set up, and to be laid ready for sea at the piers. Immediately after Easter he sent men into Veradal. There was a man called Thoralde, who was the king's bailiff, and who managed the king's farm there at Haug; and to him the king sent a message to come to him as quickly as possible. Thoralde did not decline the journey, but went immediately to the town with the messenger. The king called him in and in a private conversation asked him what truth there was in what had been told him of the principles and living of the people of the interior of Thronthjem, and if it really was so that they practised sacrifices to heathen gods. "I will," says the king, "that thou declare to me the things as they are, and as thou knowest to be true; for it is thy duty to tell me the truth, as thou art my man."

Thoralde replies, "Sire, I will first tell you that I have brought here to the town my two children, my wife, and all my loose property that I could take with me, and if thou desirest to know the truth it shall be told according to thy command; but if I declare it, thou must take care of me and mine."

The king replies, "Say only what is true on what I ask thee, and I will take care that no evil befall thee."

Then said Thoralde, "If I must say the truth, king, as it is, I must declare that in the interior of the Thronthjem land almost all the people are heathen in faith, although some of them are baptized. It is their custom to offer sacrifice in autumn for a good winter, a second at mid-winter, and a third in summer. In this the people of Eyna, Sparby, Veradal, and Skaun partake. There are twelve men who preside over these sacrifice-feasts; and in spring it is Olver who has to get the feast in order, and he is now busy transporting to Maerin everything needful for it." Now when the king had got to the truth with a certainty, he ordered the signal to be sounded for his men to assemble, and for the men-at-arms to go on board ship. He appointed men to steer the ships, and leaders for the people, and ordered how the people should be divided among the vessels. All was got ready in haste, and with five ships and 300 men he steered up the fjord. The wind was favourable, the ships sailed briskly before it, and nobody could have thought that the king would be so soon there. The king came in the night time to Maerin, and immediately surrounded the house with a ring of armed men. Olver was taken, and the king ordered him to be put

to death, and many other men besides. Then the king took all the provision for the feast, and had it brought to his ships; and also all the goods, both furniture, clothes, and valuables, which the people had brought there, and divided the booty among his men. The king also let all the bondes he thought had the greatest part in the business be plundered by his men-at-arms. Some were taken prisoners and laid in irons, some ran away, and many were robbed of their goods. Thereafter the bondes were summoned to a Thing; but because he had taken many powerful men prisoners, and held them in his power, their friends and relations resolved to promise obedience to the king, so that there was no insurrection against the king on this occasion. He thus brought the whole people back to the right faith, gave them teachers, and built and consecrated churches. The king let Olver lie without fine paid for his bloodshed, and all that he possessed was adjudged to the king; and of the men he judged the most guilty, some he ordered to be executed, some he maimed, some he drove out of the country, and took fines from others. The king then returned to Nidaros.

116. OF THE SONS OF ARNE.

There was a man called Arne Arnmodson, who was married to Thora, Thorstein Galge's daughter. Their children were Kalf, Fin, Thorberg, Amunde, Kolbjorn, Arnbjorn, and Arne. Their daughter, who was called Ragnhild, was married to Harek of Thjotta. Arne was a lenderman, powerful, and of ability, and a great friend of King Olaf. At that time his sons Kalf and Fin were with the king, and in great favour. The wife whom Olver of Eggja had left was young and handsome, of great family, and rich, so that he who got her might be considered to have made an excellent marriage; and her land was in the gift of the king. She and Olver had two sons, who were still in infancy. Kalf Arneson begged of the king that he would give him to wife the widow of Olver; and out of friendship the king agreed to it, and with her he got all the property Olver had possessed. The king at the same time made him his lenderman, and gave him an office in the interior of the Thronthjem country. Kalf became a great chief, and was a man of very great understanding.

117. KING OLAF'S JOURNEY TO THE UPLANDS.

When King Olaf had been seven years (A.D. 1015-1021) in Norway the earls Thorfin and Bruse came to him, as before related, in the summer, from Orkney, and he became master of their land. The same summer Olaf went to North and South More, and in autumn to Raumsdal. He left his ships there, and came to the Uplands, and to Lesjar. Here he laid hold of all the best men, and forced them, both at Lesjar and Dovre, either to receive Christianity or suffer death, if they were not so lucky as to escape. After they received Christianity, the king took their sons in his hands as hostages for their fidelity. The king stayed several nights at a farm in Lesjar called Boar, where he placed priests. Then he proceeded over Orkadale and Lorodal, and came down from the Uplands at a place called Stafabrekka. There a river runs along the valley, called the Otta, and a beautiful hamlet, by name Loar, lies on both sides of the river, and the king could see far down over the whole neighbourhood. "A pity it is," said the king, "so beautiful a hamlet should be burnt." And he proceeded down the valley with his people, and was all night on a farm called Nes. The king took his lodging in a loft, where he slept himself; and it stands to the present day, without anything in it having been altered since. The king was five days there, and summoned by message-token the people to a Thing, both for the districts of Vagar, Lear, and Hedal; and gave out the message along with the token, that they must either receive Christianity and give their sons as hostages, or see their habitations burnt. They came before the king, and submitted to his pleasure; but some fled south down the valley.

118. THE STORY OF DALE-GUDBRAND.

There was a man called Dale-Gudbrand, who was like a king in the valley (Gudbrandsdal), but was only herse in title. Sigvat the skald compared him for wealth and landed property to Erling Skjalgsson. Sigvat sang thus concerning Erling:—

I know but one who can compare
 With Erling for broad lands and gear—
 Gudbrand is he, whose wide domains
 Are most like where some small king reigns.
 These two great bondes, I would say,
 Equal each other every way.
 He lies who says that he can find
 One by the other left behind.

Gudbrand had a son, who is here spoken of. Now when Gudbrand received the tidings that King Olaf was come to Lear, and obliged people to accept Christianity, he sent out a message-token, and summoned all the men in the valley to meet him at a farm called Hundthorp. All came, so that the number could not be told; for there is a lake in the neighbourhood called Laugen, so that people could come to the place both by land and by water. There Gudbrand held a Thing with them, and said, "A man is come to Loar who is called Olaf, and will force upon us another faith than what we had before, and will break in pieces all our gods. He says that he has a much greater and more powerful god; and it is wonderful that the earth does not burst asunder under him, or that our god lets him go about unpunished when he dares to talk such things. I know this for certain, that if we carry Thor, who has always stood by us, out of our temple that is standing upon this farm, Olaf's god will melt away, and he and his men be made nothing so soon as Thor looks upon them." Then the bondes all shouted as one person that Olaf should never get away with life if he came to them; and they thought he would never dare to come farther south through the valley. They chose out 700 men to go northwards to Breida, to watch his movements. The leader of this band was Gudbrand's son, eighteen years of age, and with him were many other men of importance. When they came to a farm called Hof they heard of the king; and they remained three nights there. People streamed to them from all parts, from Lesjar, Loar, and Vagar, who did not wish to receive Christianity. The king and Bishop Sigurd fixed teachers in Loaf and in Vagar. From thence they went round Vagarost, and came down into the valley at Sil, where they stayed all night, and heard the news that a great force of men were assembled against them. The bondes who were in Breida heard also of the king's arrival, and prepared for battle. As soon as the king arose in the morning he put on his armour, and went southwards over the Sil plains, and did not halt until he came to Breida, where he saw a great army ready for battle. Then the king drew up his troops, rode himself at the head of them, and began a speech to the bondes, in which he invited them to adopt Christianity. They replied, "We shall give thee something else to do to-day than to be mocking us;" and raised a general shout, striking also upon their shields with their weapons. Then the king's men ran forward and threw their spears; but the bondes turned round instantly and fled, so that only few men remained behind. Gudbrand's son was taken prisoner; but the king gave him his life, and took him with him. The king was four days here. Then the king said to Gudbrand's son, "Go home now to thy father, and tell him I expect to be with him soon."

He went accordingly, and told his father the news, that they had fallen in with the king, and fought with him; but that their whole army, in the very beginning, took flight. "I was taken prisoner," said he, "but the king gave me my life and liberty, and told me to say to thee that he will soon be here. And now we have not 200 men of the force we raised against him; therefore I advise thee, father, not to give battle to that man."

Says Gudbrand, "It is easy to see that all courage has left thee, and it was an unlucky hour ye went out to the field. Thy proceeding will live long in the remembrance of people, and I see that thy fastening thy faith on the folly that man is going about with has brought upon thee and thy men so great a disgrace."

But the night after, Gudbrand dreamt that there came to him a man surrounded by light, who brought great terror with him, and said to him, "Thy son made no glorious expedition against King Olaf; but still less honour wilt thou gather for thyself by holding a battle with him. Thou with all thy people wilt fall; wolves will drag thee, and all thine, away; ravens will tear thee in stripes." At this dreadful vision he was much afraid, and tells it to Thord Istermage, who was chief over the valley. He replies, "The very same vision came to me." In the morning they ordered the signal

to sound for a Thing, and said that it appeared to them advisable to hold a Thing with the man who had come from the north with this new teaching, to know if there was any truth in it. Gudbrand then said to his son, "Go thou, and twelve men with thee, to the king who gave thee thy life." He went straightway, and found the king, and laid before him their errand; namely, that the bondes would hold a Thing with him, and make a truce between them and him. The king was content; and they bound themselves by faith and law mutually to hold the peace so long as the Thing lasted. After this was settled the men returned to Gudbrand and Thord, and told them there was made a firm agreement for a truce. The king, after the battle with the son of Gudbrand, had proceeded to Lidstad, and remained there for five days: afterwards he went out to meet the bondes, and hold a Thing with them. On that day there fell a heavy rain. When the Thing was seated, the king stood up and said that the people in Lesjar, Loaf, and Vagar had received Christianity, broken down their houses of sacrifice, and believed now in the true God who had made heaven and earth and knows all things.

Thereupon the king sat down, and Gudbrand replies, "We know nothing of him whom thou speakest about. Dost thou call him God, whom neither thou nor any one else can see? But we have a god who call be seen every day, although he is not out to-day, because the weather is wet, and he will appear to thee terrible and very grand; and I expect that fear will mix with your very blood when he comes into the Thing. But since thou sayest thy God is so great, let him make it so that to-morrow we have a cloudy day but without rain, and then let us meet again."

The king accordingly returned home to his lodging, taking Gudbrand's son as a hostage; but he gave them a man as hostage in exchange. In the evening the king asked Gudbrand's son what like their god was. He replied, that he bore the likeness of Thor; had a hammer in his hand; was of great size, but hollow within; and had a high stand, upon which he stood when he was out. "Neither gold nor silver are wanting about him, and every day he receives four cakes of bread, besides meat." They then went to bed, but the king watched all night in prayer. When day dawned the king went to mass, then to table, and from thence to the Thing. The weather was such as Gudbrand desired. Now the bishop stood up in his choir-robes, with bishop's coif upon his head, and bishop's staff in his hands. He spoke to the bondes of the true faith, told the many wonderful acts of God, and concluded his speech well.

Thord Istermage replies, "Many things we are told of by this horned man with the staff in his hand crooked at the top like a ram's horn; but since ye say, comrades, that your god is so powerful, and can do so many wonders, tell him to make it clear sunshine to-morrow forenoon, and then we shall meet here again, and do one of two things,—either agree with you about this business, or fight you." And they separated for the day.

119. DALE-GUDBRAND IS BAPTIZED.

There was a man with King Olaf called Kolbein Sterke (the strong), who came from a family in the Fjord district. Usually he was so equipped that he was girt with a sword, and besides carried a great stake, otherwise called a club, in his hands. The king told Kolbein to stand nearest to him in the morning; and gave orders to his people to go down in the night to where the ships of the bondes lay and bore holes in them, and to set loose their horses on the farms where they were; all which was done. Now the king was in prayer all the night, beseeching God of His goodness and mercy to release him from evil. When mass was ended, and morning was grey, the king went to the Thing. When he came there some bondes had already arrived, and they saw a great crowd coming along, and bearing among them a huge man's image glancing with gold and silver. When the bondes who were at the Thing saw it they started up, and bowed themselves down before the ugly idol. Thereupon it was set down upon the Thing-field; and on the one side of it sat the bondes, and on the other the king and his people.

Then Dale-Gudbrand stood up, and said, "Where now, king, is thy god? I think he will now carry his head lower; and neither thou, nor the man with the horn whom ye call bishop, and sits there beside thee, are so bold to-day as on the former days; for

now our god, who rules over all, is come, and looks on you with an angry eye; and now I see well enough that ye are terrified, and scarcely dare to raise your eyes. Throw away now all your opposition, and believe in the god who has all your fate in his hands."

The king now whispers to Kolbein Sterke, without the bondes perceiving it, "If it come so in the course of my speech that the bondes look another way than towards their idol, strike him as hard as thou canst with thy club."

The king then stood up and spoke. "Much hast thou talked to us this morning, and greatly hast thou wondered that thou canst not see our God; but we expect that he will soon come to us. Thou wouldst frighten us with thy god, who is both blind and deaf, and can neither save himself nor others, and cannot even move about without being carried; but now I expect it will be but a short time before he meets his fate: for turn your eyes towards the east,—behold our God advancing in great light."

The sun was rising, and all turned to look. At that moment Kolbein gave their god a stroke, so that the idol burst asunder; and there ran out of it mice as big almost as cats, and reptiles, and adders. The bondes were so terrified that some fled to their ships; but when they sprang out upon them they filled with water, and could not get away. Others ran to their horses, but could not find them. The king then ordered the bondes to be called together, saying he wanted to speak with them; on which the bondes came back, and the Thing was again seated.

The king rose up and said, "I do not understand what your noise and running mean. Ye see yourselves what your god can do,—the idol ye adorned with gold and silver, and brought meat and provisions to. Ye see now that the protecting powers who used it were the mice and adders, reptiles and paddocks; and they do ill who trust to such, and will not abandon this folly. Take now your gold and ornaments that are lying strewed about on the grass, and give them to your wives and daughters; but never hang them hereafter upon stock or stone. Here are now two conditions between us to choose upon,—either accept Christianity, or fight this very day; and the victory be to them to whom the God we worship gives it."

Then Dale-Gudbrand stood up and said, "We have sustained great damage upon our god; but since he will not help us, we will believe in the God thou believest in."

Then all received Christianity. The bishop baptized Gudbrand and his son. King Olaf and Bishop Sigurd left behind them teachers, and they who met as enemies parted as friends; and Gudbrand built a church in the valley.

120. HEDEMARK BAPTIZED.

King Olaf proceeded from thence to Hedemark, and baptized there; but as he had formerly carried away their kings as prisoners, he did not venture himself, after such a deed, to go far into the country with few people at that time, but a small part of Hedemark was baptized; but the king did not desist from his expedition before he had introduced Christianity over all Hedemark, consecrated churches, and placed teachers. He then went to Hadaland and Thoten, improving the customs of the people, and persisting until all the country was baptized. He then went to Ringerike, where also all people went over to Christianity. The people of Raumarike then heard that Olaf intended coming to them, and they gathered a great force. They said among themselves that the journey Olaf had made among them the last time was not to be forgotten, and he should never proceed so again. The king, notwithstanding, prepared for the journey. Now when the king went up into Raumarike with his forces, the multitude of bondes came against him at a river called Nitja; and the bondes had a strong army, and began the battle as soon as they met; but they soon fell short, and took to flight. They were forced by this battle into a better disposition, and immediately received Christianity; and the king scoured the whole district, and did not leave it until all the people were made Christians. He then went east to Solesy, and baptized that neighbourhood. The skald Ottar Black came to him there, and begged to be received among his men. Olaf the Swedish king had died the winter before (A.D. 1021), and Onund, the son of Olaf, was now the sole king over all Sweden. King Olaf

returned, when the winter (A.D. 1022) was far advanced, to Raumarike. There he assembled a numerous Thing, at a place where the Eidsvold Things have since been held. He made a law, that the Upland people should resort to this Thing, and that Eidsvold laws should be good through all the districts of the Uplands, and wide around in other quarters, which also has taken place. As spring was advancing, he rigged his ships, and went by sea to Tunsberg. He remained there during the spring, and the time the town was most frequented, and goods from other countries were brought to the town for sale. There had been a good year in Viken, and tolerable as far north as Stad; but it was a very dear time in all the country north of there.

121. RECONCILIATION OF THE KING AND EINAR.

In spring (A.D. 1022) King Olaf sent a message west to Agder, and north all the way to Hordaland and Rogaland, prohibiting the exporting or selling of corn, malt, or meal; adding, that he, as usual, would come there with his people in guest-quarters. The message went round all the districts; but the king remained in Viken all summer, and went east to the boundary of the country. Einar Tambaskelfer had been with the Swedish king Olaf since the death of his relation Earl Svein, and had, as the khag's man, received great fiefs from him. Now that the king was dead, Einar had a great desire to come into friendship agreement with Olaf; and the same spring messages passed between them about it. While the king was lying in the Gaut river, Einar Tambaskelfer came there with some men; and after treating about an agreement, it was settled that Einar should go north to Thronhjelm, and there take possession of all the lands and property which Bergliot had received in dower. Thereupon Einar took his way north; but the king remained behind in Viken, and remained long in Sarpsborg in autumn (A.D. 1022), and during the first part of winter.

122. RECONCILIATION OF THE KING AND ERLING.

Erling Skjalgson held his dominion so, that all north from Sogn Lake, and east to the Naze, the bondes stood under him; and although he had much smaller royal fiefs than formerly, still so great a dread of him prevailed that nobody dared to do anything against his will, so that the king thought his power too great. There was a man called Aslak Fitiaskalle, who was powerful and of high birth. Erling's father Skjalg, and Aslak's father Askel, were brother's sons. Aslak was a great friend of King Olaf, and the king settled him in South Hordaland, where he gave him a great fief, and great income, and ordered him in no respect to give way to Erling. But this came to nothing when the king was not in the neighbourhood; for then Erling would reign as he used to do, and was not more humble because Aslak would thrust himself forward as his equal. At last the strife went so far that Aslak could not keep his place, but hastened to King Olaf, and told him the circumstances between him and Erling. The king told Aslak to remain with him until he should meet Erling; and sent a message to Erling that he should come to him in spring at Tunsberg. When they all arrived there they held a meeting at which the king said to him, "It is told me concerning thy government, Erling, that no man from Sogn Lake to the Naze can enjoy his freedom for thee; although there are many men there who consider themselves born to udal rights, and have their privileges like others born as they are. Now, here is your relation Aslak, who appears to have suffered great inconvenience from your conduct; and I do not know whether he himself is in fault, or whether he suffers because I have placed him to defend what is mine; and although I name him, there are many others who have brought the same complaint before us, both among those who are placed in office in our districts, and among the bailiffs who have our farms to manage, and are obliged to entertain me and my people."

Erling replies to this, "I will answer at once. I deny altogether that I have ever injured Aslak, or any one else, for being in your service; but this I will not deny, that it is now, as it has long been, that each of us relations will willingly be greater than the other: and, moreover, I freely acknowledge that I am ready to bow my

neck to thee, King Olaf; but it is more difficult for me to stoop before one who is of slave descent in all his generation, although he is now your bailiff, or before others who are but equal to him in descent, although you bestow honours on them."

Now the friends of both interfered, and entreated that they would be reconciled; saying, that the king never could have such powerful aid as from Erling, "if he was your friend entirely." On the other hand, they represent to Erling that he should give up to the king; for if he was in friendship with the king, it would be easy to do with all the others what he pleased. The meeting accordingly ended so that Erling should retain the fiefs he formerly had, and every complaint the king had against Erling should be dropped; but Skjalg, Erling's son, should come to the king, and remain in his power. Then Aslak returned to his dominions, and the two were in some sort reconciled. Erling returned home also to his domains, and followed his own way of ruling them.

123. HERE BEGINS THE STORY OF ASBJORN SELSBANE.

There was a man named Sigurd Thoreson, a brother of Thorer Hund of Bjarkey Island. Sigurd was married to Sigrd Skjalg's daughter, a sister of Erling. Their son, called Asbjorn, became as he grew up a very able man. Sigurd dwelt at Omd in Thrandarnes, and was a very rich and respected man. He had not gone into the king's service; and Thorer in so far had attained higher dignity than his brother, that he was the king's lenderman. But at home, on his farm, Sigurd stood in no respect behind his brother in splendour and magnificence. As long as heathenism prevailed, Sigurd usually had three sacrifices every year: one on winter-night's eve, one on mid-winter's eve, and the third in summer. Although he had adopted Christianity, he continued the same custom with his feasts: he had, namely, a great friendly entertainment at harvest time; a Yule feast in winter, to which he invited many; the third feast he had about Easter, to which also he invited many guests. He continued this fashion as long as he lived. Sigurd died on a bed of sickness when Asbjorn was eighteen years old. He was the only heir of his father, and he followed his father's custom of holding three festivals every year. Soon after Asbjorn came to his heritage the course of seasons began to grow worse, and the corn harvests of the people to fail; but Asbjorn held his usual feasts, and helped himself by having old corn, and an old provision laid up of all that was useful. But when one year had passed and another came, and the crops were no better than the year before, Sigurd wished that some if not all of the feasts should be given up. That Asbjorn would not consent to, but went round in harvest among his friends, buying corn where he could get it, and some he received in presents. He thus kept his feasts this winter also; but the spring after people got but little seed into the ground, for they had to buy the seed-corn. Then Sigurd spoke of diminishing the number of their house-servants. That Asbjorn would not consent to, but held by the old fashion of the house in all things. In summer (A.D. 1022) it appeared again that there would be a bad year for corn; and to this came the report from the south that King Olaf prohibited all export of corn, malt, or meal from the southern to the northern parts of the country. Then Asbjorn perceived that it would be difficult to procure what was necessary for a house-keeping, and resolved to put into the water a vessel for carrying goods which he had, and which was large enough to go to sea with. The ship was good, all that belonged to her was of the best, and in the sails were stripes of cloth of various colours. Asbjorn made himself ready for a voyage, and put to sea with twenty men. They sailed from the north in summer; and nothing is told of their voyage until one day, about the time the days begin to shorten, they came to Karmtsund, and landed at Augvaldsnes. Up in the island Karmt there is a large farm, not far from the sea, and a large house upon it called Augvaldsnes, which was a king's house, with an excellent farm, which Thorer Sel, who was the king's bailiff, had under his management. Thorer was a man of low birth, but had swung himself up in the world as an active man; and he was polite in speech, showy in clothes, and fond of distinction, and not apt to give way to others, in which he was supported by the favour of the king. He was besides quick in speech, straightforward, and free in conver-

sation. Asbjorn, with his company, brought up there for the night; and in the morning, when it was light, Thorer went down to the vessel with some men, and inquired who commanded the splendid ship. Asbjorn named his own and his father's name. Thorer asks where the voyage was intended for, and what was the errand.

Asbjorn replies, that he wanted to buy corn and malt; saying, as was true, that it was a very dear time north in the country. "But we are told that here the seasons are good; and wilt thou, farmer, sell us corn? I see that here are great corn stacks, and it would be very convenient if we had not to travel farther."

Thorer replies, "I will give thee the information that thou needst not go farther to buy corn, or travel about here in Rogaland; for I can tell thee that thou must turn about, and not travel farther, for the king forbids carrying corn out of this to the north of the country. Sail back again, Halogaland, for that will be thy safest course."

Asbjorn replies, "If it be so, bonde, as thou sayest, that we can get no corn here to buy, I will, notwithstanding, go forward upon my errand, and visit my family in Sole, and see my relation Erling's habitation."

Thorer: "How near is thy relationship to Erling?"

Asbjorn: "My mother is his sister."

Thorer: "It may be that I have spoken heedlessly, if so be that thou art sister's son of Erling."

Thereupon Asbjorn and his crew struck their tents, and turned the ship to sea. Thorer called after them. "A good voyage, and come here again on your way back." Asbjorn promised to do so, sailed away, and came in the evening to Jadar. Asbjorn went on shore with ten men; the other ten men watched the ship. When Asbjorn came to the house he was very well received, and Erling was very glad to see him, placed him beside himself, and asked him all the news in the north of the country. Asbjorn concealed nothing of his business from him; and Erling said it happened unfortunately that the king had just forbid the sale of corn. "And I know no man here," says he, "who has courage to break the king's order, and I find it difficult to keep well with the king, so many are trying to break our friendship."

Asbjorn replies, "It is late before we learn the truth. In my childhood I was taught that my mother was freeborn throughout her whole descent, and that Erling of Sole was her boldest relation; and now I hear thee say that thou hast not the freedom, for the king's slaves here in Jadar, to do with thy own corn what thou pleasest."

Erling looked at him, smiled through his teeth, and said, "Ye Halogalanders know less of the king's power than we do here; but a bold man thou mayst be at home in thy conversation. Let us now drink, my friend, and we shall see tomorrow what can be done in thy business."

They did so, and were very merry all the evening. The following day Erling and Asbjorn talked over the matter again, and Erling said, "I have found out a way for you to purchase corn, Asbjorn. It is the same thing to you whoever is the seller." He answered that he did not care of whom he bought the corn, if he got a good right to his purchase. Erling said, "It appears to me probable that my slaves have quite as much corn as you require to buy; and they are not subject to law, or land regulation, like other men." Asbjorn agreed to the proposal. The slaves were now spoken to about the purchase, and they brought forward corn and malt, which they sold to Asbjorn, so that he loaded his vessel with what he wanted. When he was ready for sea Erling followed him on the road, made him presents of friendship, and they took a kind farewell of each other. Asbjorn got a good breeze, landed in the evening at Karmtsund, near to Augvaldsnes, and remained there for the night. Thorer Sel had heard of Asbjorn's voyage, and also that his vessel was deeply laden. Thorer summoned people to him in the night, so that before daylight he had sixty men; and with these he went against Asbjorn as soon as it was light, and went out to the ship just as Asbjorn and his men were putting on their clothes. Asbjorn saluted Thorer, and Thorer asked what kind of goods Asbjorn had in the vessel.

He replied, "Corn and malt."

Thorer said, "Then Erling is doing as he usually does, and despising the king's orders, and is unwearied in opposing him in all things, insomuch that it is wonderful the king suffers it."

Thorer went on scolding in this way, and when he was silent Asbjorn said that Erling's slaves had owned the corn.

Thorer replied hastily, that he did not regard Erling's tricks. "And now, Asbjorn, there is no help for it; ye must either go on shore, or we will throw you overboard; for we will not be troubled with you while we are discharging the cargo."

Asbjorn saw that he had not men enough to resist Thorer; therefore he and his people landed, and Thorer took the small cargo out of the vessel. When the vessel was discharged Thorer went through the ship, and observed. "Ye Halogalanders have good sails: take the old sail of our vessel and give it them; it is good enough for those who are sailing in a light vessel." Thus the sails were exchanged. When this was done Asbjorn and his comrades sailed away north along the coast, and did not stop until they reached home early in winter. This expedition was talked of far and wide, and Asbjorn had no trouble that winter in making feasts at home. Thorer Hund invited Asbjorn and his mother, and also all whom they pleased to take along with him, to a Yule feast; but Asbjorn sat at home, and would not travel, and it was to be seen that Thorer thought Asbjorn despised his invitation, since he would not come. Thorer scoffed much at Asbjorn's voyage. "Now," said he, "it is evident that Asbjorn makes a great difference in his respect towards his relations; for in summer he took the greatest trouble to visit his relation Erling in Jadar, and now will not take the trouble to come to me in the next house. I don't know if he thinks there may be a Thorer Sel in his way upon every holm." Such words, and the like sarcasms, Asbjorn heard of; and very ill satisfied he was with his voyage, which had thus made him a laughing-stock to the country, and he remained at home all winter, and went to no feasts.

124. MURDER OF THORER SEL.

Asbjorn had a long-ship standing in the noust (shipshed), and it was a snekke (cutter) of twenty benches; and after Candlemas (February 2, 1023), he had the vessel put in the water, brought out all his furniture, and rigged her out. He then summoned to him his friends and people, so that he had nearly ninety men all well armed. When he was ready for sea, and got a wind, he sailed south along the coast, but as the wind did not suit, they advanced but slowly. When they came farther south they steered outside the rocks, without the usual ships' channel, keeping to sea as much as it was possible to do so. Nothing is related of his voyage before the fifth day of Easter (April 18, 1023), when, about evening, they came on the outside of Karmt Island. This island is so shaped that it is very long, but not broad at its widest part; and without it lies the usual ships' channel. It is thickly inhabited; but where the island is exposed to the ocean great tracts of it are uncultivated. Asbjorn and his men landed at a place in the island that was uninhabited. After they had set up their ship-tents Asbjorn said, "Now ye must remain here and wait for me. I will go on land in the isle, and spy what news there may be which we know nothing of." Asbjorn had on mean clothes, a broadbrimmed hat, a fork in his hand, but had girt on his sword under his clothes. He went up to the land, and in through the island; and when he came upon a hillock, from which he could see the house on Augvaldsnes, and on as far as Karmtsund, he saw people in all quarters flocking together by land and by sea, and all going up to the house of Augvaldsnes. This seemed to him extraordinary; and therefore he went up quietly to a house close by, in which servants were cooking meat. From their conversation he discovered immediately that the king Olaf had come there to a feast, and that he had just sat down to table. Asbjorn turned then to the feasting-room, and when he came into the ante-room one was going in and another coming out; but nobody took notice of him. The hall-door was open, and he saw that Thorer Sel stood before the table of the high-seat. It was getting late in the evening, and Asbjorn heard people ask Thorer what had taken place between him and Asbjorn; and Thorer had a long story about it, in which he evidently departed from the truth. Among other things he heard a man say, "How did Asbjorn behave when

you discharged his vessel?" Thorer replied, "When we were taking out the cargo he bore it tolerably, but not well; and when we took the sail from him he wept." When Asbjorn heard this he suddenly drew his sword, rushed into the hall, and cut at Thorer. The stroke took him in the neck, so that the head fell upon the table before the king, and the body at his feet, and the table-cloth was soiled with blood from top to bottom. The king ordered him to be seized and taken out. This was done. They laid hands on Asbjorn, and took him from the hall. The table-furniture and table-cloths were removed, and also Thorer's corpse, and all the blood wiped up. The king was enraged to the highest; but remained quiet in speech, as he always was when in anger.

125. OF SKJALG, THE SON OF ERLING SKJALGSON.

Skjalg Erlingson stood up, went before the king, and said, "Now may it go, as it often does, that every case will admit of alleviation. I will pay thee the mulct for the bloodshed on account of this man, so that he may retain life and limbs. All the rest determine and do, king, according to thy pleasure."

The king replies, "Is it not a matter of death, Skjalg, that a man break the Easter peace; and in the next place that he kills a man in the king's lodging; and in the third that he makes my feet his execution-block, although that may appear a small matter to thee and thy father?"

Skjalg replies, "It is ill done, king, in as far as it displeases thee; but the deed is, otherwise, done excellently well. But if the deed appear to thee so important, and be so contrary to thy will, yet may I expect something for my services from thee; and certainly there are many who will say that thou didst well."

The king replies, "Although thou hast made me greatly indebted to thee, Skjalg, for thy services, yet I will not for thy sake break the law, or cast away my own dignity."

Then Skjalg turned round, and went out of the hall. Twelve men who had come with Skjalg all followed him, and many others went out with him. Skjalg said to Thorarin Nefiulfson, "If thou wilt have me for a friend, take care that this man be not killed before Sunday." Thereupon Skjalg and his men set off, took a rowing boat which he had, and rowed south as fast as they could, and came to Jadar with the first glimpse of morning. They went up instantly to the house, and to the loft in which Erling slept. Skjalg rushed so hard against the door that it burst asunder at the nails. Erling and the others who were within started up. He was in one spring upon his legs, grasped his shield and sword, and rushed to the door, demanding who was there. Skjalg named himself, and begs him to open the door. Erling replies, "It was most likely to be thee who hast behaved so foolishly; or is there any one who is pursuing thee?" Thereupon the door was unlocked. Then said Skjalg, "Although it appears to thee that I am so hasty, I suppose our relation Asbjorn will not think my proceedings too quick; for he sits in chains there in the north at Augvaldsnes, and it would be but manly to hasten back and stand by him." The father and son then had a conversation together, and Skjalg related the whole circumstances of Thorer Sel's murder.

126. OF THORARIN NEFIULFSON.

King Olaf took his seat again when everything in the hall was put in order, and was enraged beyond measure. He asked how it was with the murderer. He was answered, that he was sitting out upon the doorstep under guard.

The king says, "Why is he not put to death?"

Thorarin Nefiulfson replies, "Sire, would you not call it murder to kill a man in the night-time?"

The king answers, "Put him in irons then, and kill him in the morning."

Then Asbjorn was laid in chains, and locked up in a house for the night. The day after the king heard the morning mass, and then went to the Thing, where he sat till high mass. As he was going to mass he said to Thorarin, "Is not the sun high enough now in the heavens that your friend Asbjorn may be hanged?"

Thorarin bowed before the king, and said, "Sire, it was said by Bishop Sigurd on Friday last, that the King who has all things in

his power had to endure great temptation of spirit; and blessed is he who rather imitates him, than those who condemned the man to death, or those who caused his slaughter. It is not long till tomorrow, and that is a working day."

The king looked at him, and said, "Thou must take care then that he is not put to death to-day; but take him under thy charge, and know for certain that thy own life shall answer for it if he escape in any way."

Then the king went away. Thorarin went also to where Asbjorn lay in irons, took off his chains, and brought him to a small room, where he had meat and drink set before him, and told him what the king had determined in case Asbjorn ran away. Asbjorn replies, that Thorarin need not be afraid of him. Thorarin sat a long while with him during the day, and slept there all night. On Saturday the king arose and went to the early mass, and from thence he went to the Thing, where a great many bondes were assembled, who had many complaints to be determined. The king sat there long in the day, and it was late before the people went to high mass. Thereafter the king went to table. When he had got meat he sat drinking for a while, so that the tables were not removed. Thorarin went out to the priest who had the church under his care, and gave him two marks of silver to ring in the Sabbath as soon as the king's table was taken away. When the king had drunk as much as he wished the tables were removed. Then said the king, that it was now time for the slaves to go to the murderer and put him to death. In the same moment the bell rang in the Sabbath.

Then Thorarin went before the king, and said, "The Sabbath-peace this man must have, although he has done evil."

The king said, "Do thou take care, Thorarin, that he do not escape."

The king then went to the church, and attended the vesper service, and Thorarin sat the whole day with Asbjorn. On Sunday the bishop visited Asbjorn, confessed him, and gave him orders to hear high mass. Thorarin then went to the king, and asked him to appoint men to guard the murderer. "I will now," he said, "be free of this charge." The king thanked him for his care, and ordered men to watch over Asbjorn, who was again laid in chains. When the people went to high mass Asbjorn was led to the church, and he stood outside of the church with his guard; but the king and all the people stood in the church at mass.

127. ERLING'S RECONCILIATION WITH KING OLAF.

Now we must again take up our story where we left it,—that Erling and his son Skjalg held a council on this affair, and according to the resolution of Erling, and of Skjalg and his other sons, it was determined to assemble a force and send out message-tokens. A great multitude of people accordingly came together. They got ready with all speed, rigged their ships, and when they reckoned upon their force they found they had nearly 1500 men. With this war-force they set off, and came on Sunday to Augvaldsnes on Karmt Island. They went straight up to the house with all the men, and arrived just as the Scripture lesson was read. They went directly to the church, took Asbjorn, and broke off his chains. At the tumult and clash of arms all who were outside of the church ran into it; but they who were in the church looked all towards him. Erling and his sons drew up their men on each side of the path which led from the church to the hall, and Erling with his sons stood next to the hall. When high mass was finished the king went immediately out of the church, and first went through the open space between the ranks drawn up, and then his retinue, man by man; and as he came to the door Erling placed himself before the door, bowed to the king, and saluted him. The king saluted him in return, and prayed God to help him. Erling took up the word first, and said, "My relation, Asbjorn, it is reported to me, has been guilty of misdemeanor, king; and it is a great one, if he has done anything that incurs your displeasure. Now I am come to entreat for him peace, and such penalties as you yourself may determine; but that thereby he redeem life and limb, and his remaining here in his native land."

The king replies, "It appears to me, Erling, that thou thinkest

the case of Asbjorn is now in thy own power, and I do not therefore know why thou speakest now as if thou wouldst offer terms for him. I think thou hast drawn together these forces because thou art determined to settle what is between us."

Erling replies, "Thou only, king, shalt determine, and determine so that we shall be reconciled."

The king: "Thinkest thou, Erling, to make me afraid? And art thou come here in such force with that expectation? No, that shall not be; and if that be thy thought, I must in no way turn and fly."

Erling replies, "Thou hast no occasion to remind me how often I have come to meet thee with fewer men than thou hadst. But now I shall not conceal what lies in my mind, namely, that it is my will that we now enter into a reconciliation; for otherwise I expect we shall never meet again." Erling was then as red as blood in the face.

Now Bishop Sigurd came forward to the king and said, "Sire, I entreat you on God Almighty's account to be reconciled with Erling according to his offer,—that the man shall retain life and limb, but that thou shalt determine according to thy pleasure all the other conditions."

The king replies, "You will determine."

Then said the bishop, "Erling, do thou give security for Asbjorn, such as the king thinks sufficient, and then leave the conditions to the mercy of the king, and leave all in his power."

Erling gave a surety to the king on his part, which he accepted.

Thereupon Asbjorn received his life and safety, and delivered himself into the king's power, and kissed his hand.

Erling then withdrew with his forces, without exchanging salutation with the king; and the king went into the hall, followed by Asbjorn. The king thereafter made known the terms of reconciliation to be these:—"In the first place, Asbjorn, thou must submit to the law of the land, which commands that the man who kills a servant of the king must undertake his service, if the king will. Now I will that thou shalt undertake the office of bailiff which Thorer Sel had, and manage my estate here in Augvaldsnes." Asbjorn replies, that it should be according to the king's will; "but I must first go home to my farm, and put things in order there." The king was satisfied with this, and proceeded to another guest-quarter. Asbjorn made himself ready with his comrades, who all kept themselves concealed in a quiet creek during the time Asbjorn was away from them. They had had their spies out to learn how it went with him, and would not depart without having some certain news of him.

128. OF THORER HUND AND ASBJORN SELSBANE.

Asbjorn then set out on his voyage, and about spring (A.D. 1023) got home to his farm. After this exploit he was always called Asbjorn Selsbane. Asbjorn had not been long at home before he and his relation Thorer met and conversed together, and Thorer asked Asbjorn particularly all about his journey, and about all the circumstances which had happened on the course of it. Asbjorn told everything as it had taken place.

Then said Thorer, "Thou thinkest that thou hast well rubbed out the disgrace of having been plundered in last harvest."

"I think so," replies Asbjorn; "and what is thy opinion, cousin?"

"That I will soon tell thee," said Thorer. "Thy first expedition to the south of the country was indeed very disgraceful, and that disgrace has been redeemed; but this expedition is both a disgrace to thee and to thy family, if it end in thy becoming the king's slave, and being put on a footing with that worst of men, Thorer Sel. Show that thou art manly enough to sit here on thy own property, and we thy relations shall so support thee that thou wilt never more come into such trouble."

Asbjorn found this advice much to his mind; and before they parted it was firmly determined that Asbjorn should remain on his farm, and not go back to the king or enter into his service. And he did so, and sat quietly at home on his farm.

129. KING OLAF BAPTIZES IN VORS AND VALDERS.

After King Olaf and Erling Skjalgson had this meeting at Augvaldsnes, new differences arose between them, and increased so

much that they ended in perfect enmity. In spring (A.D. 1023) the king proceeded to guest-quarters in Hordaland, and went up also to Vørs, because he heard there was but little of the true faith among the people there. He held a Thing with the bondes at a place called Vang, and a number of bondes came to it fully armed. The king ordered them to adopt Christianity; but they challenged him to battle, and it proceeded so far that the men were drawn up on both sides. But when it came to the point such a fear entered into the blood of the bondes that none would advance or command, and they chose the part which was most to their advantage; namely, to obey the king and receive Christianity; and before the king left them they were all baptized. One day it happened that the king was riding on his way a singing of psalms, and when he came right opposite some hills he halted and said, "Man after man shall relate these my words, that I think it not advisable for any king of Norway to travel hereafter between these hills." And it is a saying among the people that the most kings since that time have avoided it. The king proceeded to Ostrarfjord, and came to his ships, with which he went north to Sogn, and had his living in guest-quarters there in summer (A.D. 1023); when autumn approached he turned in towards the Fjord district, and went from thence to Valdres, where the people were still heathen. The king hastened up to the lake in Valdres, came unexpectedly on the bondes, seized their vessels, and went on board of them with all his men. He then sent out message-tokens, and appointed a Thing so near the lake that he could use the vessels if he found he required them. The bondes resorted to the Thing in a great and well-armed host; and when he commanded them to accept Christianity the bondes shouted against him, told him to be silent, and made a great uproar and clashing of weapons. But when the king saw that they would not listen to what he would teach them, and also that they had too great a force to contend with, he turned his discourse, and asked if there were people at the Thing who had disputes with each other which they wished him to settle. It was soon found by the conversation of the bondes that they had many quarrels among themselves, although they had all joined in speaking against Christianity. When the bondes began to set forth their own cases, each endeavored to get some upon his side to support him; and this lasted the whole day long until evening, when the Thing was concluded. When the bondes had heard that the king had travelled to Valdres, and was come into their neighborhood, they had sent out message-tokens summoning the free and the unfree to meet in arms, and with this force they had advanced against the king; so that the neighbourhood all around was left without people. When the Thing was concluded the bondes still remained assembled; and when the king observed this he went on board his ships, rowed in the night right across the water, landed in the country there, and began to plunder and burn. The day after the king's men rowed from one point of land to another, and over all the king ordered the habitations to be set on fire. Now when the bondes who were assembled saw what the king was doing, namely, plundering and burning, and saw the smoke and flame of their houses, they dispersed, and each hastened to his own home to see if he could find those he had left. As soon as there came a dispersion among the crowd, the one slipped away after the other, until the whole multitude was dissolved. Then the king rowed across the lake again, burning also on that side of the country. Now came the bondes to him begging for mercy, and offering to submit to him. He gave every man who came to him peace if he desired it, and restored to him his goods; and nobody refused to adopt Christianity. The king then had the people christened, and took hostages from the bondes. He ordered churches to be built and consecrated, and placed teachers in them. He remained a long time here in autumn, and had his ships drawn across the neck of land between the two lakes. The king did not go far from the sides of the lakes into the country, for he did not much trust the bondes. When the king thought that frost might be expected, he went further up the country, and came to Thoten. Arnor, the earl's skald, tells how King Olaf burnt in the Uplands, in the poem he composed concerning the king's brother King Harald:—

Against the Upland people wroth,
Olaf, to most so mild, went forth:
The houses burning,

All people mourning;
Who could not fly
Hung on gallows high.
It was, I think, in Olaf's race
The Upland people to oppress.

Afterwards King Olaf went north through the valleys to Dovrefield, and did not halt until he reached the Thronhjelm district and arrived at Nidaros, where he had ordered winter provision to be collected, and remained all winter (A.D. 1024). This was the tenth year of his reign.

130. OF EINAR TAMBASKELFER.

The summer before Einar Tambaskelfer left the country, and went westward to England (A.D. 1023). There he met his relative Earl Hakon, and stayed some time with him. He then visited King Canute, from whom he received great presents. Einar then went south all the way to Rome, and came back the following summer (A.D. 1024), and returned to his house and land. King Olaf and Einar did not meet this time.

131. THE BIRTH OF KING MAGNUS.

There was a girl whose name was Alfild, and who was usually called the king's slave-woman, although she was of good descent. She was a remarkably handsome girl, and lived in King Olaf's court. It was reported this spring that Alfild was with child, and the king's confidential friends knew that he was father of the child. It happened one night that Alfild was taken ill, and only few people were at hand; namely, some women, priests, Sigvat the skald, and a few others. Alfild was so ill that she was nearly dead; and when she was delivered of a man-child, it was some time before they could discover whether the child was in life. But when the infant drew breath, although very weak, the priest told Sigvat to hasten to the king, and tell him of the event.

He replies, "I dare not on any account waken the king; for he has forbid that any man should break his sleep until he awakens of himself."

The priest replies, "It is of necessity that this child be immediately baptized, for it appears to me there is but little life in it."

Sigvat said, "I would rather venture to take upon me to let thee baptize the child, than to awaken the king; and I will take it upon myself if anything be amiss, and will give the child a name."

They did so; and the child was baptized, and got the name of Magnus. The next morning, when the king awoke and had dressed himself, the circumstance was told him. He ordered Sigvat to be called, and said, "How camest thou to be so bold as to have my child baptized before I knew anything about it?"

Sigvat replies, "Because I would rather give two men to God than one to the devil."

The king—"What meanest thou?"

Sigvat—"The child was near death, and must have been the devil's if it had died as a heathen, and now it is God's. And I knew besides that if thou shouldst be so angry on this account that it affected my life, I would be God's also."

The king asked, "But why didst thou call him Magnus, which is not a name of our race?"

Sigvat—"I called him after King Carl Magnus, who, I knew, had been the best man in the world."

Then said the king, "Thou art a very lucky man, Sigvat; but it is not wonderful that luck should accompany understanding. It is only wonderful how it sometimes happens that luck attends ignorant men, and that foolish counsel turns out lucky." The king was overjoyed at the circumstance. The boy grew up, and gave good promise as he advanced in age.

132. THE MURDER OF ASBJORN SELSBANE.

The same spring (A.D. 1024) the king gave into the hands of Asmund Grankelson the half of the sheriffdom of the district of Halogaland, which Harek of Thjotta had formerly held, partly in fief, partly for defraying the king's entertainment in guest-quarters. Asmund had a ship manned with nearly thirty well-armed men. When Asmund came north he met Harek, and told him what the

king had determined with regard to the district, and produced to him the tokens of the king's full powers. Harek said, "The king had the right to give the sheriffdom to whom he pleased; but the former sovereigns had not been in use to diminish our rights who are entitled by birth to hold powers from the king, and to give them into the hands of the peasants who never before held such offices." But although it was evident that it was against Harek's inclination, he allowed Asmund to take the sheriffdom according to the king's order. Then Asmund proceeded home to his father, stayed there a short time, and then went north to Halogaland to his sheriffdom; and he came north to Langey Island, where there dwelt two brothers called Gunstein and Karle, both very rich and respectable men. Gunstein, the eldest of the brothers, was a good husbandman. Karle was a handsome man in appearance, and splendid in his dress; and both were, in many respects, expert in all feats. Asmund was well received by them, remained with them a while, and collected such revenues of his sheriffdom as he could get. Karle spoke with Asmund of his wish to go south with him and take service in the court of King Olaf, to which Asmund encouraged him much, promising his influence with the king for obtaining for Karle such a situation as he desired; and Karle accordingly accompanied Asmund. Asmund heard that Asbjorn, who had killed Thorer Sel, had gone to the market-meeting of Vagar with a large ship of burden manned with nearly twenty men, and that he was now expected from the south. Asmund and his retinue proceeded on their way southwards along the coast with a contrary wind, but there was little of it. They saw some of the fleet for Vagar sailing towards them; and they privately inquired of them about Asbjorn, and were told he was upon the way coming from the south. Asmund and Karle were bedfellows, and excellent friends. One day, as Asmund and his people were rowing through a sound, a ship of burden came sailing towards them. The ship was easily known, having high bulwarks, was painted with white and red colours, and coloured cloth was woven in the sail. Karle said to Asmund, "Thou hast often said thou wast curious to see Asbjorn who killed Thorer Sel; and if I know one ship from another, that is his which is coming sailing along."

Asmund replies, "Be so good, comrade, and tell me which is he when thou seest him."

When the ships came alongside of each other, "That is Asbjorn," said Karle; "the man sitting at the helm in a blue cloak."

Asmund replies, "I shall make his blue cloak red;" threw a spear at Asbjorn, and hit him in the middle of the body, so that it flew through and through him, and stuck fast in the upper part of the stern-post; and Asbjorn fell down dead from the helm. Then each vessel sailed on its course, and Asbjorn's body was carried north to Thrandarnes. Then Sigrid sent a message to Bjarkey Isle to Thorer Hund, who came to her while they were, in the usual way, dressing the corpse of Asbjorn. When he returned Sigrid gave presents to all her friends, and followed Thorer to his ship; but before they parted she said, "It has so fallen out, Thorer, that my son has suffered by thy friendly counsel, but he did not retain life to reward thee for it; but although I have not his ability yet will I show my good will. Here is a gift I give thee, which I expect thou wilt use. Here is the spear which went through Asbjorn my son, and there is still blood upon it, to remind thee that it fits the wound thou hast seen on the corpse of thy brother's son Asbjorn. It would be a manly deed, if thou shouldst throw this spear from thy hand so that it stood in Olaf's breast; and this I can tell thee, that thou wilt be named coward in every man's mouth, if thou dost not avenge Asbjorn." Thereupon she turned about, and went her way.

Thorer was so enraged at her words that he could not speak. He neither thought of casting the spear from him, nor took notice of the gangway; so that he would have fallen into the sea, if his men had not laid hold of him as he was going on board his ship. It was a feathered spear; not large, but the handle was gold-mounted. Now Thorer rowed away with his people, and went home to Bjarkey Isle. Asmund and his companions also proceeded on their way until they came south to Thronthjem, where they waited on King Olaf; and Asmund related to the king all that had happened on the voyage. Karle became one of the king's court-men, and the friendship continued between him and Asmund. They did not keep se-

cret the words that had passed between Asmund and Karle before Asbjorn was killed; for they even told them to the king. But then it happened, according to the proverb, that every one has a friend in the midst of his enemies. There were some present who took notice of the words, and they reached Thorer Hund's ears.

133. OF KING OLAF.

When spring (A.D. 1024) was advanced King Olaf rigged out his ships, and sailed southwards in summer along the land. He held Things with the bondes on the way, settled the law business of the people, put to rights the faith of the country, and collected the king's taxes wherever he came. In autumn he proceeded south to the frontier of the country; and King Olaf had now made the people Christians in all the great districts, and everywhere, by laws, had introduced order into the country. He had also, as before related, brought the Orkney Islands under his power, and by messages had made many friends in Iceland, Greenland, and the Farey Islands. King Olaf had sent timber for building a church to Iceland, of which a church was built upon the Thing-field where the General Thing is held, and had sent a bell for it, which is still there. This was after the Iceland people had altered their laws, and introduced Christianity, according to the word King Olaf had sent them. After that time, many considerable persons came from Iceland, and entered into King Olaf's service; as Thorkel Eyjolfson, and Thorleif Bollason, Thord Kolbeinson, Thord Barkarson, Thorgeir Havarson, Thormod Kalbrunar-skald. King Olaf had sent many friendly presents to chief people in Iceland; and they in return sent him such things as they had which they thought most acceptable. Under this show of friendship which the king gave Iceland were concealed many things which afterwards appeared.

134. KING OLAF'S MESSAGE TO ICELAND, AND THE COUNSELS OF THE ICELANDERS.

King Olaf this summer (A.D. 1024) sent Thorarin Nefiulfson to Iceland on his errands; and Thorarin went out of Thronthjem fjord along with the king, and followed him south to More. From thence Thorarin went out to sea, and got such a favourable breeze that after four days sail he landed at the Westman Isles, in Iceland. He proceeded immediately to the Althing, and came just as the people were upon the Lawhillock, to which he repaired. When the cases of the people before the Thing had been determined according to law, Thorarin Nefiulfson took up the word as follows:—"We parted four days ago from King Olaf Haraldson, who sends God Almighty's and his own salutation to all the chiefs and principal men of the land; as also to all the people in general, men and women, young and old, rich and poor. He also lets you know that he will be your sovereign if ye will become his subjects, so that he and you will be friends, assisting each other in all that is good."

The people replied in a friendly way, that they would gladly be the king's friends, if he would be a friend of the people of their country.

Then Thorarin again took up the word:—"This follows in addition to the king's message, that he will in friendship desire of the people of the north district that they give him the island, or out-rock, which lies at the mouth of Eyfjord, and is called Grimsey, for which he will give you from his country whatever good the people of the district may desire. He sends this message particularly to Gudmund of Modruvellir to support this matter, because he understands that Gudmund has most influence in that quarter."

Gudmund replies, "My inclination is greatly for King Olaf's friendship, and that I consider much more useful than the out-rock he desires. But the king has not heard rightly if he think I have more power in this matter than any other, for the island is a common. We, however, who have the most use of the isle, will hold a meeting among ourselves about it."

Then the people went to their tent-houses; and the Northland people had a meeting among themselves, and talked over the business, and every one spoke according to his judgment. Gudmund supported the matter, and many others formed their opinions by his. Then some asked why his brother Einar did not speak on the subject. "We think he has the clearest insight into most things."

Einar answers, "I have said so little about the matter because nobody has asked me about it; but if I may give my opinion, our countrymen might just as well make themselves at once liable to land-scat to King Olaf, and submit to all his exactions as he has them among his people in Norway; and this heavy burden we will lay not only upon ourselves, but on our sons, and their sons, and all our race, and on all the community dwelling and living in this land, which never after will be free from this slavery. Now although this king is a good man, as I well believe him to be, yet it must be hereafter, when kings succeed each other, that some will be good, and some bad. Therefore if the people of this country will preserve the freedom they have enjoyed since the land was first inhabited, it is not advisable to give the king the smallest spot to fasten himself upon the country by, and not to give him any kind of scat or service that can have the appearance of a duty. On the other hand, I think it very proper that the people send the king such friendly presents of hawks or horses, tents or sails, or such things which are suitable gifts; and these are well applied if they are repaid with friendship. But as to Grimsey Isle, I have to say, that although nothing is drawn from it that can serve for food, yet it could support a great war-force cruising from thence in long-ships; and then, I doubt not, there would be distress enough at every poor peasant's door."

When Einar had thus explained the proper connection of the matter, the whole community were of one mind that such a thing should not be permitted; and Thorarin saw sufficiently well what the result of his errand was to be.

135. THE ANSWER OF THE ICELANDERS.

The day following, Thorarin went again to the Lawhill, and brought forward his errand in the following words:—"King Olaf sends his message to his friends here in the country, among whom he reckons Gudmund Eyjolfson, Snorre Gode, Thorkel Eyjolfson, Skapte the lagman, and Thorstein Halson, and desires them by me to come to him on a friendly visit; and adds, that ye must not excuse yourselves, if you regard his friendship as worth anything." In their answer they thanked the king for his message and added, that they would afterwards give a reply to it by Thorarin when they had more closely considered the matter with their friends. The chiefs now weighed the matter among themselves, and each gave his own opinion about the journey. Snorre and Skapte dissuaded from such a dangerous proceeding with the people of Norway; namely, that all the men who had the most to say in the country should at once leave Iceland. They added, that from this message, and from what Einar had said, they had the suspicion that the king intended to use force and strong measures against the Icelanders if he ruled in the country. Gudmund and Thorkel Eyjolfson insisted much that they should follow King Olaf's invitation, and called it a journey of honour. But when they had considered the matter on all sides, it was at last resolved that they should not travel themselves, but that each of them should send in his place a man whom they thought best suited for it. After this determination the Thing was closed, and there was no journey that summer. Thorarin made two voyages that summer, and about harvest was back again at King Olaf's, and reported the result of his mission, and that some of the chiefs, or their sons, would come from Iceland according to his message.

136. OF THE PEOPLE OF THE FAREY ISLANDS.

The same summer (A.D. 1024) there came from the Farey Islands to Norway, on the king's invitation, Gille the lagman, Leif Ossurson, Thoralf of Dimun, and many other bondes' sons. Thord of Gata made himself ready for the voyage; but just as he was setting out he got a stroke of palsy, and could not come, so he remained behind. Now when the people from the Farey Isles arrived at King Olaf's, he called them to him to a conference, and explained the purpose of the journey he had made them take, namely, that he would have scat from the Farey Islands, and also that the people there should be subject to the laws which the king should give them. In that meeting it appeared from the king's words that he would make the Farey people who had come answerable, and

would bind them by oath to conclude this union. He also offered to the men whom he thought the ablest to take them into his service, and bestow honour and friendship on them. These Farey men understood the king's words so, that they must dread the turn the matter might take if they did not submit to all that the king desired. Although they held several meetings about the business before it ended, the king's desire at last prevailed. Leif, Gille, and Thoralf went into the king's service, and became his courtmen; and they, with all their travelling companions, swore the oath to King Olaf, that the law and land privilege which he set them should be observed in the Farey Islands, and also the scat be levied that he laid upon them. Thereafter the Farey people prepared for their return home, and at their departure the king gave those who had entered into his service presents in testimony of his friendship, and they went their way. Now the king ordered a ship to be rigged, manned it, and sent men to the Farey Islands to receive the scat from the inhabitants which they should pay him. It was late before they were ready; but they set off at last: and of their journey all that is to be told is, that they did not come back, and no scat either, the following summer; for nobody had come to the Farey Isles, and no man had demanded scat there.

137. OF THE MARRIAGE OF KETIL AND OF THORD TO THE KING'S SISTERS.

King Olaf proceeded about harvest time to Viken, and sent a message before him to the Uplands that they should prepare guest-quarters for him, as he intended to be there in winter. Afterwards he made ready for his journey, and went to the Uplands, and remained the winter there; going about in guest-quarters, and putting things to rights where he saw it needful, advancing also the cause of Christianity wheresoever it was requisite. It happened while King Olaf was in Hedemark that Ketil Kalf of Ringanes courted Gunhild, a daughter of Sigurd Syr and of King Olaf's mother Asta. Gunhild was a sister of King Olaf, and therefore it belonged to the king to give consent and determination to the business. He took it in a friendly way; for he knew Ketil, that he was of high birth, wealthy, and of good understanding, and a great chief; and also he had long been a great friend of King Olaf, as before related. All these circumstances induced the king to approve of the match, and so it was that Ketil got Gunhild. King Olaf was present at the wedding. From thence the king went north to Gudbrandsdal, where he was entertained in guest-quarters. There dwelt a man, by name Thord Guthormson, on a farm called Steig; and he was the most powerful man in the north end of the valley. When Thord and the king met, Thord made proposals for Isrid, the daughter of Gudbrand, and the sister of King Olaf's mother, as it belonged to the king to give consent. After the matter was considered, it was determined that the marriage should proceed, and Thord got Isrid. Afterwards Thord was the king's faithful friend, and also many of Thord's relations and friends, who followed his footsteps. From thence King Olaf returned south through Thoten and Hadaland, from thence to Ringerike, and so to Viken. In spring (A.D. 1025) he went to Tunsberg, and stayed there while there was the market-meeting, and a great resort of people. He then had his vessels rigged out, and had many people about him.

138. OF THE ICELANDERS.

The same summer (A.D. 1025) came Stein, a son of the lagman Skapte, from Iceland, in compliance with King Olaf's message; and with him Thorod, a son of Snorre the gode, and Geller, a son of Thorkel Eyjolfson, and Egil, a son of Hal of Sida, brother of Thorstein Hal. Gudmund Eyjolfson had died the winter before. These Iceland men repaired to King Olaf as soon as they had opportunity; and when they met the king they were well received, and all were in his house. The same summer King Olaf heard that the ship was missing which he had sent the summer before to the Farey Islands after the scat, and nobody knew what had become of it. The king fitted out another ship, manned it, and sent it to the Farey Islands for the scat. They got under weigh, and proceeded to sea; but as little was ever heard of this vessel as of the former one, and many conjectures were made about what had become of them.

139. HERE BEGINS THE STORY OF CANUTE THE GREAT.

During this time Canute the Great, called by some Canute the Old, was king of England and Denmark. Canute the Great was a son of Svein Haraldson Forkedbeard, whose forefathers, for a long course of generations, had ruled over Denmark. Harald Gormson, Canute's grandfather, had conquered Norway after the fall of Harald Grafeld, Gunhild's son, had taken scat from it, and had placed Earl Hakon the Great to defend the country. The Danish King, Svein Haraldson, ruled also over Norway, and placed his son-in-law Earl Eirik, the son of Earl Hakon, to defend the country. The brothers Eirik and Svein, Earl Hakon's sons, ruled the land until Earl Eirik went west to England, on the invitation of his brother-in-law Canute the Great, when he left behind his son Earl Hakon, sister's son of Canute the Great, to govern Norway. But when Olaf the Thick came first to Norway, as before related, he took prisoner Earl Hakon the son of Eirik, and deposed him from the kingdom. Then Hakon proceeded to his mother's brother, Canute the Great, and had been with him constantly until the time to which here in our saga we have now come. Canute the Great had conquered England by blows and weapons, and had a long struggle before the people of the land were subdued. But when he had set himself perfectly firm in the government of the country, he remembered that he also had right to a kingdom which he had not brought under his authority; and that was Norway. He thought he had hereditary right to all Norway; and his sister's son Hakon, who had held a part of it, appeared to him to have lost it with disgrace. The reason why Canute and Hakon had remained quiet with respect to their claims upon Norway was, that when King Olaf Haraldson landed in Norway the people and commonalty ran together in crowds, and would hear of nothing but that Olaf should be king over all the country, although some afterwards, who thought that the people upon account of his power had no self-government left to them, went out of the country. Many powerful men, or rich bondes sons, had therefore gone to Canute the Great, and pretended various errands; and every one who came to Canute and desired his friendship was loaded with presents. With Canute, too, could be seen greater splendour and pomp than elsewhere, both with regard to the multitude of people who were daily in attendance, and also to the other magnificent things about the houses he owned and dwelt in himself. Canute the Great drew scat and revenue from the people who were the richest of all in northern lands; and in the same proportion as he had greater revenues than other kings, he also made greater presents than other kings. In his whole kingdom peace was so well established, that no man dared break it. The people of the country kept the peace towards each other, and had their old country law: and for this he was greatly celebrated in all countries. And many of those who came from Norway represented their hardships to Earl Hakon, and some even to King Canute himself; and that the Norway people were ready to turn back to the government of King Canute, or Earl Hakon, and receive deliverance from them. This conversation suited well the earl's inclination, and he carried it to the king, and begged of him to try if King Olaf would not surrender the kingdom, or at least come to an agreement to divide it; and many supported the earl's views.

140. CANUTE'S MESSAGE TO KING OLAF.

Canute the Great sent men from the West, from England, to Norway, and equipped them magnificently for the journey. They were bearers of the English king Canute's letter and seal. They came about spring (A.D. 1025) to the king of Norway, Olaf Haraldson, in Tunsberg. Now when it was told the king that ambassadors had arrived from Canute the Great he was ill at ease, and said that Canute had not sent messengers hither with any messages that could be of advantage to him or his people; and it was some days before the ambassadors could come before the king. But when they got permission to speak to him they appeared before the king, and made known King Canute's letter, and their errand which accompanied it; namely, "that King Canute considers all Norway as his property, and insists that his forefathers before him have possessed that kingdom; but as King Canute offers peace to all

countries, he will also offer peace to all here, if it can be so settled, and will not invade Norway with his army if it can be avoided. Now if King Olaf Haraldson wishes to remain king of Norway, he will come to King Canute, and receive his kingdom as a fief from him, become his vassal, and pay the scat which the earls before him formerly paid." Thereupon they presented their letters, which contained precisely the same conditions.

Then King Olaf replies, "I have heard say, by old stories, that the Danish king Gorm was considered but a small king of a few people, for he ruled over Denmark alone; but the kings who succeeded him thought that was too little. It has since come so far that King Canute rules over Denmark and England, and has conquered for himself a great part of Scotland. Now he claims also my paternal heritage, and will then show some moderation in his covetousness. Does he wish to rule over all the countries of the North? Will he eat up all the kail in England? He shall do so, and reduce that country to a desert, before I lay my head in his hands, or show him any other kind of vassalage. Now ye shall tell him these my words,—I will defend Norway with battle-axe and sword as long as life is given me, and will pay scat to no man for my kingdom."

After this answer King Canute's ambassadors made themselves ready for their journey home, and were by no means rejoiced at the success of their errand.

Sigvat the skald had been with King Canute, who had given him a gold ring that weighed half a mark. The skald Berse Skaldtorfason was also there, and to him King Canute gave two gold rings, each weighing two marks, and besides a sword inlaid with gold. Sigvat made this song about it:—

When we came o'er the wave, you cub,
When we came o'er the wave,
To me one ring, to thee two rings,
The mighty Canute gave:
One mark to me,
Four marks to thee,—
A sword too, fine and brave.
Now God knows well,
And skalds can tell,
What justice here would crave.

Sigvat the skald was very intimate with King Canute's messengers, and asked them many questions. They answered all his inquiries about their conversation with King Olaf, and the result of their message. They said the king listened unwillingly to their proposals. "And we do not know," say they, "to what he is trusting when he refuses becoming King Canute's vassal, and going to him, which would be the best thing he could do; for King Canute is so mild that however much a chief may have done against him, he is pardoned if he only show himself obedient. It is but lately that two kings came to him from the North, from Fife in Scotland, and he gave up his wrath against them, and allowed them to retain all the lands they had possessed before, and gave them besides very valuable gifts." Then Sigvat sang:—

From the North land, the midst of Fife,
Two kings came begging peace and life;
Craving from Canute life and peace,—
May Olaf's good luck never cease!
May he, our gallant Norse king, never
Be brought, like these, his head to offer
As ransom to a living man
For the broad lands his sword has won.

King Canute's ambassadors proceeded on their way back, and had a favourable breeze across the sea. They came to King Canute, and told him the result of their errand, and King Olaf's last words. King Canute replies, "King Olaf guesses wrong, if he thinks I shall eat up all the kail in England; for I will let him see that there is something else than kail under my ribs, and cold kail it shall be for him." The same summer (A.D. 1025) Aslak and Skjalg, the sons of Erling of Jadar, came from Norway to King Canute, and were well received; for Aslak was married to Sigrid, a daughter of Earl Svein Hakonson, and she and Earl Hakon Eirikson were brothers' children. King Canute gave these brothers great fiefs over there, and they stood in great favour.

141. KING OLAF'S ALLIANCE WITH ONUND THE KING OF SVITHJOD.

King Olaf summoned to him all the lenders, and had a great many people about him this summer (A.D. 1025), for a report was abroad that King Canute would come from England. People had heard from merchant vessels that Canute was assembling a great army in England. When summer was advanced, some affirmed and others denied that the army would come. King Olaf was all summer in Viken, and had spies out to learn if Canute was come to Denmark. In autumn (A.D. 1025) he sent messengers eastward to Svithjod to his brother-in-law King Onund, and let him know King Canute's demand upon Norway; adding, that, in his opinion, if Canute subdued Norway, King Onund would not long enjoy the Swedish dominions in peace. He thought it advisable, therefore, that they should unite for their defence. "And then," said he, "we will have strength enough to hold out against Canute." King Onund received King Olaf's message favourably, and replied to it, that he for his part would make common cause with King Olaf, so that each of them should stand by the one who first required help with all the strength of his kingdom. In these messages between them it was also determined that they should have a meeting, and consult with each other. The following winter (A.D. 1026) King Onund intended to travel across West Gautland, and King Olaf made preparations for taking his winter abode at Sarpsborg.

142. KING CANUTE'S AMBASSADORS TO ONUND OF SVITHJOD.

In autumn King Canute the Great came to Denmark, and remained there all winter (A.D. 1026) with a numerous army. It was told him that ambassadors with messages had been passing between the Swedish and Norwegian kings, and that some great plans must be concerting between them. In winter King Canute sent messengers to Svithjod, to King Onund, with great gifts and messages of friendship. He also told Onund that he might sit altogether quiet in this strife between him and Olaf the Thick; "for thou, Onund," says he, "and thy kingdom, shall be in peace as far as I am concerned." When the ambassadors came to King Onund they presented the gifts which King Canute sent him, together with the friendly message. King Onund did not hear their speech very willingly, and the ambassadors could observe that King Onund was most inclined to a friendship with King Olaf. They returned accordingly, and told King Canute the result of their errand, and told him not to depend much upon the friendship of King Onund.

143. THE EXPEDITION TO BJARMALAND.

This winter (A.D. 1026) King Olaf sat in Sarpsborg, and was surrounded by a very great army of people. He sent the Halogalander Karle to the north country upon his business. Karle went first to the Uplands, then across the Dovrefield, and came down to Nidaros, where he received as much money as he had the king's order for, together with a good ship, such as he thought suitable for the voyage which the king had ordered him upon; and that was to proceed north to Bjarmaland. It was settled that the king should be in partnership with Karle, and each of them have the half of the profit. Early in spring Karle directed his course to Halogaland, where his brother Gunstein prepared to accompany him, having his own merchant goods with him. There were about twenty-five men in the ship; and in spring they sailed north to Finmark. When Thorer Hund heard this, he sent a man to the brothers with the verbal message that he intended in summer to go to Bjarmaland, and that he would sail with them, and that they should divide what booty they made equally between them. Karle sent him back the message that Thorer must have twenty-five men as they had, and they were willing to divide the booty that might be taken equally, but not the merchant goods which each had for himself. When Thorer's messenger came back he had put a stout long-ship he owned into the water, and rigged it, and he had put eighty men on board of his house-servants. Thorer alone had the command over this crew, and he alone had all the goods they might acquire on the cruise. When Thorer was ready for sea he set out northwards along the coast, and found Karle a little north of Sandver. They then proceeded with good wind. Gunstein said to his brother, as

soon as they met Thorer, that in his opinion Thorer was strongly manned. "I think," said he, "we had better turn back than sail so entirely in Thorer's power, for I do not trust him." Karle replies, "I will not turn back, although if I had known when we were at home on Langey Isle that Thorer Hund would join us on this voyage with so large a crew as he has, I would have taken more hands with us." The brothers spoke about it to Thorer, and asked what was the meaning of his taking more people with him than was agreed upon between them. He replies, "We have a large ship which requires many hands, and methinks there cannot be too many brave lads for so dangerous a cruise." They went in summer as fast in general as the vessels could go. When the wind was light the ship of the brothers sailed fastest, and they separated; but when the wind freshened Thorer overtook them. They were seldom together, but always in sight of each other. When they came to Bjarmaland they went straight to the merchant town, and the market began. All who had money to pay with got filled up with goods. Thorer also got a number of furs, and of beaver and sable skins. Karle had a considerable sum of money with him, with which he purchased skins and furs. When the fair was at an end they went out of the Vina river, and then the truce of the country people was also at an end. When they came out of the river they held a seaman's council, and Thorer asked the crews if they would like to go on the land and get booty.

They replied, that they would like it well enough, if they saw the booty before their eyes.

Thorer replies, that there was booty to be got, if the voyage proved fortunate; but that in all probability there would be danger in the attempt.

All said they would try, if there was any chance of booty. Thorer explained, that it was so established in this land, that when a rich man died all his movable goods were divided between the dead man and his heirs. He got the half part, or the third part, or sometimes less, and that part was carried out into the forest and buried,—sometimes under a mound, sometimes in the earth, and sometimes even a house was built over it. He tells them at the same time to get ready for this expedition at the fall of day. It was resolved that one should not desert the other, and none should hold back when the commander ordered them to come on board again. They now left people behind to take care of the ships, and went on land, where they found flat fields at first, and then great forests. Thorer went first, and the brothers Karle and Gunstein in rear. Thorer commanded the people to observe the utmost silence. "And let us peel the bark off the trees," says he, "so that one tree-mark can be seen from the other." They came to a large cleared opening, where there was a high fence upon which there was a gate that was locked. Six men of the country people held watch every night at this fence, two at a time keeping guard, each two for a third part of the night, when Thorer and his men came to the fence the guard had gone home, and those who should relieve them had not yet come upon guard. Thorer went to the fence, stuck his axe up in it above his head, hauled himself up by it, and so came over the fence, and inside the gate. Karle had also come over the fence, and to the inside of the gate; so that both came at once to the port, took the bar away, and opened the port; and then the people got in within the fence. Then said Thorer, "Within this fence there is a mound in which gold, and silver, and earth are all mixed together: seize that. But within here stands the Bjarmaland people's god Jomala: let no one be so presumptuous as to rob him." Thereupon they went to the mound and took as much of the money as they could carry away in their clothes, with which, as might be expected, much earth was mixed. Thereafter Thorer said that the people now should retreat. "And ye brothers, Karle and Gunstein," says he, "do ye lead the way, and I will go last." They all went accordingly out of the gate: but Thorer went back to Jomala, and took a silver bowl that stood upon his knee full of silver money. He put the silver in his purse, and put his arm within the handle of the bowl, and so went out of the gate. The whole troop had come without the fence; but when they perceived that Thorer had stayed behind, Karle returned to trace him, and when they met upon the path Thorer had the silver bowl with him. Thereupon Karle immediately ran to Jomala; and observing he had a thick gold ornament hanging around his neck, he lifted his axe,

cut the string with which the ornament was tied behind his neck, and the stroke was so strong that the head of Jomala rang with such a great sound that they were all astonished. Karle seized the ornament, and they all hastened away. But the moment the sound was made the watchmen came forward upon the cleared space, and blew their horns. Immediately the sound of the loor was heard all around from every quarter, calling the people together. They hastened to the forest, and rushed into it; and heard the shouts and cries on the other side of the Bjarmaland people in pursuit. Thorer Hund went the last of the whole troop; and before him went two men carrying a great sack between them, in which was something that was like ashes. Thorer took this in his hand, and strewed it upon the footpath, and sometimes over the people. They came thus out of the woods, and upon the fields, but heard incessantly the Bjarmaland people pursuing with shouts and dreadful yells. The army of the Bjarmaland people rushed out after them upon the field, and on both sides of them; but neither the people nor their weapons came so near as to do them any harm: from which they perceived that the Bjarmaland people did not see them. Now when they reached their ships Karle and his brother went on board; for they were the foremost, and Thorer was far behind on the land. As soon as Karle and his men were on board they struck their tents, cast loose their land ropes, hoisted their sails, and their ship in all haste went to sea. Thorer and his people, on the other hand, did not get on so quickly, as their vessel was heavier to manage; so that when they got under sail, Karle and his people were far off from land. Both vessels sailed across the White sea (Gandvik). The nights were clear, so that both ships sailed night and day; until one day, towards the time the day turns to shorten, Karle and his people took up the land near an island, let down the sail, cast anchor, and waited until the slack-tide set in, for there was a strong roost before them. Now Thorer came up, and lay at anchor there also. Thorer and his people then put out a boat, went into it, and rowed to Karle's ship. Thorer came on board, and the brothers saluted him. Thorer told Karle to give him the ornament. "I think," said he, "that I have best earned the ornaments that have been taken, for methinks ye have to thank me for getting away without any loss of men; and also I think thou, Karle, set us in the greatest fright."

Karle replies, "King Olaf has the half part of all the goods I gather on this voyage, and I intend the ornament for him. Go to him, if you like, and it is possible he will give thee the ornament, although I took it from Jomala."

Then Thorer insisted that they should go upon the island, and divide the booty.

Gunstein says, "It is now the turn of the tide, and it is time to sail." Whereupon they began to raise their anchor.

When Thorer saw that, he returned to his boat and rowed to his own ship. Karle and his men had hoisted sail, and were come a long way before Thorer got under way. They now sailed so that the brothers were always in advance, and both vessels made all the haste they could. They sailed thus until they came to Geirsver, which is the first roadstead of the traders to the North. They both came there towards evening, and lay in the harbour near the landing-place. Thorer's ship lay inside, and the brothers' the outside vessel in the port. When Thorer had set up his tents he went on shore, and many of his men with him. They went to Karle's ship, which was well provided. Thorer hailed the ship, and told the commanders to come on shore; on which the brothers, and some men with them, went on the land. Now Thorer began the same discourse, and told them to bring the goods they got in booty to the land to have them divided. The brothers thought that was not necessary, until they had arrived at their own neighbourhood. Thorer said it was unusual not to divide booty but at their own home, and thus to be left to the honour of other people. They spoke some words about it, but could not agree. Then Thorer turned away; but had not gone far before he came back, and tells his comrades to wait there. Thereupon he calls to Karle, and says he wants to speak with him alone. Karle went to meet him; and when he came near, Thorer struck at him with a spear, so that it went through him. "There," said Thorer, "now thou hast learnt to know a Bjarkey Island man. I thought thou shouldst feel Asbjorn's spear." Karle died instantly, and Thorer with his people

went immediately on board their ship. When Gunstein and his men saw Karle fall they ran instantly to him, took his body and carried it on board their ship, struck their tents, and cast off from the pier, and left the land. When Thorer and his men saw this, they took down their tents and made preparations to follow. But as they were hoisting the sail the fastenings to the mast broke in two, and the sail fell down across the ship, which caused a great delay before they could hoist the sail again. Gunstein had already got a long way ahead before Thorer's ship fetched way, and now they used both sails and oars. Gunstein did the same. On both sides they made great way day and night; but so that they did not gain much on each other, although when they came to the small sounds among the islands Gunstein's vessel was lighter in turning. But Thorer's ship made way upon them, so that when they came up to Lengjuvik, Gunstein turned towards the land, and with all his men ran up into the country, and left his ship. A little after Thorer came there with his ship, sprang upon the land after them, and pursued them. There was a woman who helped Gunstein to conceal himself, and it is told that she was much acquainted with witchcraft. Thorer and his men returned to the vessels, and took all the goods out of Gunstein's vessel, and put on board stones in place of the cargo, and then hauled the ship out into the fjord, cut a hole in its bottom, and sank it to the bottom. Thereafter Thorer, with his people, returned home to Bjarkey Isle. Gunstein and his people proceeded in small boats at first, and lay concealed by day, until they had passed Bjarkey, and had got beyond Thorer's district. Gunstein went home first to Langey Isle for a short time, and then proceeded south without any halt, until he came south to Throndhjem, and there found King Olaf, to whom he told all that had happened on this Bjarmaland expedition. The king was ill-pleased with the voyage, but told Gunstein to remain with him, promising to assist him when opportunity offered. Gunstein took the invitation with thanks, and stayed with King Olaf.

144. MEETING OF KING OLAF AND KING ONUND.

King Olaf was, as before related, in Sarpsborg the winter (A.D. 1026) that King Canute was in Denmark. The Swedish king Onund rode across West Gautland the same winter, and had thirty hundred men with him. Men and messages passed between them; and they agreed to meet in spring at Konungahella. The meeting had been postponed, because they wished to know before they met what King Canute intended doing. As it was now approaching towards winter, King Canute made ready to go over to England with his forces, and left his son Hardaknut to rule in Denmark, and with him Earl Ulf, a son of Thorgils Sprakaleg. Ulf was married to Astrid, King Svein's daughter, and sister of Canute the Great. Their son Svein was afterwards king of Denmark. Earl Ulf was a very distinguished man. When the kings Olaf and Onund heard that Canute the Great had gone west to England, they hastened to hold their conference, and met at Konungahella, on the Gaut river. They had a joyful meeting, and had many friendly conversations, of which something might become known to the public; but they also spake often a great deal between themselves, with none but themselves two present, of which only some things afterwards were carried into effect, and thus became known to every one. At parting the kings presented each other with gifts, and parted the best of friends. King Onund went up into Gautland, and Olaf northwards to Viken, and afterwards to Agder, and thence northwards along the coast, but lay a long time at Egersund waiting a wind. Here he heard that Erling Skjalgson, and the inhabitants of Jadar with him, had assembled a large force. One day the king's people were talking among themselves whether the wind was south or south-west, and whether with that wind they could sail past Jadar or not. The most said it was impossible to fetch round. Then answers Haldor Brynjolfson, "I am of opinion that we would go round Jadar with this wind fast enough if Erling Skjalgson had prepared a feast for us at Sole." Then King Olaf ordered the tents to be struck, and the vessels to be hauled out, which was done. They sailed the same day past Jadar with the best wind, and in the evening reached Hirtingsey, from whence the king proceeded to Hordaland, and was entertained there in

guest-quarters.

145. THORALF'S MURDER.

The same summer (A.D. 1026) a ship sailed from Norway to the Farey Islands, with messengers carrying a verbal message from King Olaf, that one of his court-men, Leif Ossurson, or Lagman Gille, or Thoralf of Dimun, should come over to him from the Farey Islands. Now when this message came to the Farey Islands, and was delivered to those whom it concerned, they held a meeting among themselves, to consider what might lie under this message, and they were all of opinion that the king wanted to inquire into the real state of the event which some said had taken place upon the islands; namely, the failure and disappearance of the former messengers of the king, and the loss of the two ships, of which not a man had been saved. It was resolved that Thoralf should undertake the journey. He got himself ready, and rigged out a merchant-vessel belonging to himself, manned with ten or twelve men. When it was ready, waiting a wind, it happened, at Austrey, in the house of Thrand of Gata, that he went one fine day into the room where his brother's two sons, Sigurd and Thord, sons of Thorlak, were lying upon the benches in the room. Gaut the Red was also there, who was one of their relations and a man of distinction. Sigurd was the oldest, and their leader in all things. Thord had a distinguished name, and was called Thord the Low, although in reality he was uncommonly tall, and yet in proportion more strong than large. Then Thrand said, "How many things are changed in the course of a man's life! When we were young, it was rare for young people who were able to do anything to sit or lie still upon a fine day, and our forefathers would scarcely have believed that Thoralf of Dimun would be bolder and more active than ye are. I believe the vessel I have standing here in the boat-house will be so old that it will rot under its coat of tar. Here are all the houses full of wool, which is neither used nor sold. It should not be so if I were a few winters younger." Sigurd sprang up, called upon Gaut and Thord, and said he would not endure Thrand's scoffs. They went out to the houseservants, and launched the vessel upon the water, brought down a cargo, and loaded the ship. They had no want of a cargo at home, and the vessel's rigging was in good order, so that in a few days they were ready for sea. There were ten or twelve men in the vessel. Thoralf's ship and theirs had the same wind, and they were generally in sight of each other. They came to the land at Herna in the evening, and Sigurd with his vessel lay outside on the strand, but so that there was not much distance between the two ships. It happened towards evening, when it was dark, that just as Thoralf and his people were preparing to go to bed, Thoralf and another went on shore for a certain purpose. When they were ready, they prepared to return on board. The man who had accompanied Thoralf related afterwards this story,—that a cloth was thrown over his head, and that he was lifted up from the ground, and he heard a great bustle. He was taken away, and thrown head foremost down; but there was sea under him, and he sank under the water. When he got to land, he went to the place where he and Thoralf had been parted, and there he found Thoralf with his head cloven down to his shoulders, and dead. When the ship's people heard of it they carried the body out to the ship, and let it remain there all night. King Olaf was at that time in guest-quarters at Lygra, and thither they sent a message. Now a Thing was called by message-token, and the king came to the Thing. He had also ordered the Farey people of both vessels to be summoned, and they appeared at the Thing. Now when the Thing was seated, the king stood up and said, "Here an event has happened which (and it is well that it is so) is very seldom heard of. Here has a good man been put to death, without any cause. Is there any man upon the Thing who can say who has done it?"

Nobody could answer.

"Then," said the king, "I cannot conceal my suspicion that this deed has been done by the Farey people themselves. It appears to me that it has been done in this way,—that Sigurd Thorlakson has killed the man, and Thord the Low has cast his comrade into the sea. I think, too, that the motives to this must have been to hinder Thoralf from telling about the misdeed of which he had

information; namely, the murder which I suspect was committed upon my messengers."

When he had ended his speech, Sigurd Thorlakson stood up, and desired to be heard. "I have never before," said he, "spoken at a Thing, and I do not expect to be looked upon as a man of ready words. But I think there is sufficient necessity before me to reply something to this. I will venture to make a guess that the speech the king has made comes from some man's tongue who is of far less understanding and goodness than he is, and has evidently proceeded from those who are our enemies. It is speaking improbabilities to say that I could be Thoralf's murderer; for he was my foster-brother and good friend. Had the case been otherwise, and had there been anything outstanding between me and Thoralf, yet I am surely born with sufficient understanding to have done this deed in the Farey Islands, rather than here between your hands, sire. But I am ready to clear myself, and my whole ship's crew, of this act, and to make oath according to what stands in your laws. Or, if ye find it more satisfactory, I offer to clear myself by the ordeal of hot iron; and I wish, sire, that you may be present yourself at the proof."

When Sigurd had ceased to speak there were many who supported his case, and begged the king that Sigurd might be allowed to clear himself of this accusation. They thought that Sigurd had spoken well, and that the accusation against him might be untrue.

The king replies, "It may be with regard to this man very differently, and if he is belied in any respect he must be a good man; and if not, he is the boldest I have ever met with: and I believe this is the case, and that he will bear witness to it himself."

At the desire of the people, the king took Sigurd's obligation to take the iron ordeal; he should come the following day to Lygra, where the bishop should preside at the ordeal; and so the Thing closed. The king went back to Lygra, and Sigurd and his comrades to their ship.

As soon as it began to be dark at night Sigurd said to his ship's people. "To say the truth, we have come into a great misfortune; for a great lie is got up against us, and this king is a deceitful, crafty man. Our fate is easy to be foreseen where he rules; for first he made Thoralf be slain, and then made us the misdoers, without benefit of redemption by fine. For him it is an easy matter to manage the iron ordeal, so that I fear he will come ill off who tries it against him. Now there is coming a brisk mountain breeze, blowing right out of the sound and off the land; and it is my advice that we hoist our sail, and set out to sea. Let Thrand himself come with his wool to market another summer; but if I get away, it is my opinion I shall never think of coming to Norway again."

His comrades thought the advice good, hoisted their sail, and in the night-time took to the open sea with all speed. They did not stop until they came to Farey, and home to Gata. Thrand was ill-pleased with their voyage, and they did not answer him in a very friendly way; but they remained at home, however, with Thrand. The morning after, King Olaf heard of Sigurd's departure, and heavy reports went round about this case; and there were many who believed that the accusation against Sigurd was true, although they had denied and opposed it before the king. King Olaf spoke but little about the matter, but seemed to know of a certainty that the suspicion he had taken up was founded in truth. The king afterwards proceeded in his progress, taking up his abode where it was provided for him.

146. OF THE ICELANDERS.

King Olaf called before him the men who had come from Iceland, Thorod Snorrason, Geller Thorkelson, Stein Skaptason, and Egil Halson, and spoke to them thus:—"Ye have spoken to me much in summer about making yourselves ready to return to Iceland, and I have never given you a distinct answer. Now I will tell you what my intention is. Thee, Geller, I propose to allow to return, if thou wilt carry my message there; but none of the other Icelanders who are now here may go to Iceland before I have heard how the message which thou, Geller, shalt bring thither has been received."

When the king had made this resolution known, it appeared to those who had a great desire to return, and were thus forbidden, that they were unreasonably and hardly dealt with, and that

they were placed in the condition of unfree men. In the meantime Geller got ready for his journey, and sailed in summer (A.D. 1026) to Iceland, taking with him the message he was to bring before the Thing the following summer (A.D. 1027). The king's message was, that he required the Icelanders to adopt the laws which he had set in Norway, also to pay him thane-tax and nose-tax; namely, a penny for every nose, and the penny at the rate of ten pennies to the yard of wadmal. At the same time he promised them his friendship if they accepted, and threatened them with all his vengeance if they refused his proposals.

The people sat long in deliberation on this business; but at last they were unanimous in refusing all the taxes and burdens which were demanded of them. That summer Geller returned back from Iceland to Norway to King Olaf, and found him in autumn in the east in Viken, just as he had come from Gautland; of which I shall speak hereafter in this story of King Olaf. Towards the end of autumn King Olaf repaired north to Thronthjem, and went with his people to Nidaros, where he ordered a winter residence to be prepared for him. The winter (A.D. 1027) that he passed here in the merchant-town of Nidaros was the thirteenth year of his reign.

147. OF THE JAMTALAND PEOPLE.

There was once a man called Ketil Jamte, a son of Earl Onund of Sparby, in the Thronthjem district. He fled over the ridge of mountains from Eystein Illrade, cleared the forest, and settled the country now called the province of Jamtaland. A great many people joined him from the Thronthjem land, on account of the disturbances there; for this King Eystein had laid taxes on the Thronthjem people, and set his dog, called Saur, to be king over them. Thorer Helsing was Ketil's grandson, and he colonised the province called Helsingjaland, which is named after him. When Harald Harfager subdued the kingdom by force, many people fled out of the country from him, both Thronthjem people and Nau-mudal people, and thus new settlements were added to Jamtaland; and some settlers went even eastwards to Helsingjaland and down to the Baltic coast, and all became subjects of the Swedish king. While Hakon Athelstan's foster-son was over Norway there was peace, and merchant traffic from Thronthjem to Jamtaland; and, as he was an excellent king, the Jamtalanders came from the east to him, paid him scat, and he gave them laws and administered justice. They would rather submit to his government than to the Swedish king's, because they were of Norwegian race; and all the Helsingjaland people, who had their descent from the north side of the mountain ridge, did the same. This continued long after those times, until Olaf the Thick and the Swedish king Olaf quarrelled about the boundaries. Then the Jamtaland and Helsingjaland people went back to the Swedish king; and then the forest of Eid was the eastern boundary of the land, and the mountain ridge, or keel of the country, the northern: and the Swedish king took scat of Helsingjaland, and also of Jamtaland. Now, thought the king of Norway, Olaf, in consequence of the agreement between him and the Swedish king, the scat of Jamtaland should be paid differently than before; although it had long been established that the Jamtaland people paid their scat to the Swedish king, and that he appointed officers over the country. The Swedes would listen to nothing, but that all the land to the east of the keel of the country belonged to the Swedish king. Now this went so, as it often happens, that although the kings were brothers-in-law and relations, each would hold fast the dominions which he thought he had a right to. King Olaf had sent a message round in Jamtaland, declaring it to be his will that the Jamtaland people should be subject to him, threatening them with violence if they refused; but the Jamtaland people preferred being subjects of the Swedish king.

148. STEIN'S STORY.

The Icelanders, Thorod Snorrason and Stein Skaptason, were ill-pleased at not being allowed to do as they liked. Stein was a remarkably handsome man, dexterous at all feats, a great poet, splendid in his apparel, and very ambitious of distinction. His father, Skapte, had composed a poem on King Olaf, which he had taught Stein, with the intention that he should bring it to King

Olaf. Stein could not now restrain himself from making the king reproaches in word and speech, both in verse and prose. Both he and Thorod were imprudent in their conversation, and said the king would be looked upon as a worse man than those who, under faith and law, had sent their sons to him, as he now treated them as men without liberty. The king was angry at this. One day Stein stood before the king, and asked if he would listen to the poem which his father Skapte had composed about him. The king replies, "Thou must first repeat that, Stein, which thou hast composed about me." Stein replies, that it was not the case that he had composed any. "I am no skald, sire," said he; "and if I even could compose anything, it, and all that concerns me, would appear to thee of little value." Stein then went out, but thought he perceived what the king alluded to. Thorgeir, one of the king's land-bailiffs, who managed one of his farms in Orkadal, happened to be present, and heard the conversation of the king and Stein, and soon afterwards Thorgeir returned home. One night Stein left the city, and his footboy with him. They went up Gaularas and into Orkadal. One evening they came to one of the king's farms which Thorgeir had the management of, and Thorgeir invited Stein to pass the night there, and asked where he was travelling to. Stein begged the loan of a horse and sledge, for he saw they were just driving home corn.

Thorgeir replies, "I do not exactly see how it stands with thy journey, and if thou art travelling with the king's leave. The other day, methinks, the words were not very sweet that passed between the king and thee."

Stein said, "If it be so that I am not my own master for the king, yet I will not submit to such treatment from his slaves;" and, drawing his sword, he killed the landbailiff. Then he took the horse, put the boy upon him, and sat himself in the sledge, and so drove the whole night. They travelled until they came to Surnadal in More. There they had themselves ferried across the fjord, and proceeded onwards as fast as they could. They told nobody about the murder, but wherever they came called themselves king's men, and met good entertainment everywhere. One day at last they came towards evening to Giske Isle, to Thorberg Arnason's house. He was not at home himself, but his wife Ragnhild, a daughter of Erling Skjalgson, was. There Stein was well received, because formerly there had been great friendship between them. It had once happened, namely, that Stein, on his voyage from Iceland with his own vessel, had come to Giske from sea, and had anchored at the island. At that time Ragnhild was in the pains of childbirth, and very ill, and there was no priest on the island, or in the neighbourhood of it. There came a message to the merchant-vessel to inquire if, by chance, there was a priest on board. There happened to be a priest in the vessel, who was called Bard; but he was a young man from Westfjord, who had little learning. The messengers begged the priest to go with them, but he thought it was a difficult matter: for he knew his own ignorance, and would not go. Stein added his word to persuade the priest. The priest replies, "I will go if thou wilt go with me; for then I will have confidence, if I should require advice." Stein said he was willing; and they went forthwith to the house, and to where Ragnhild was in labour. Soon after she brought forth a female child, which appeared to be rather weak. Then the priest baptized the infant, and Stein held it at the baptism, at which it got the name of Thora; and Stein gave it a gold ring. Ragnhild promised Stein her perfect friendship, and bade him come to her whenever he thought he required her help. Stein replied that he would hold no other female child at baptism, and then they parted. Now it was come to the time when Stein required this kind promise of Ragnhild to be fulfilled, and he told her what had happened, and that the king's wrath had fallen upon him. She answered, that all the aid she could give should stand at his service; but bade him wait for Thorberg's arrival. She then showed him to a seat beside her son Eystein Orre, who was then twelve years old. Stein presented gifts to Ragnhild and Eystein. Thorberg had already heard how Stein had conducted himself before he got home, and was rather vexed at it. Ragnhild went to him, and told him how matters stood with Stein, and begged Thorberg to receive him, and take care of him.

Thorberg replies, "I have heard that the king, after sending out a message-token, held a Thing concerning the murder of Thorgeir,

and has condemned Stein as having fled the country, and likewise that the king is highly incensed: and I have too much sense to take the cause of a foreigner in hand, and draw upon myself the king's wrath. Let Stein, therefore, withdraw from hence as quickly as thou canst."

Ragnhild replied, that they should either both go or both stay.

Thorberg told her to go where she pleased. "For I expect," said he, "that wherever thou goest thou wilt soon come back, for here is thy importance greatest."

Her son Eysteinn Orre then stood forward, and said he would not stay behind if Ragnhild goes.

Thorberg said that they showed themselves very stiff and obstinate in this matter. "And it appears that ye must have your way in it, since ye take it so near to heart; but thou art reckoning too much, Ragnhild, upon thy descent, in paying so little regard to King Olaf's word."

Ragnhild replied, "If thou art so much afraid to keep Stein with thee here, go with him to my father Erling, or give him attendants, so that he may get there in safety." Thorberg said he would not send Stein there; "for there are enough of things besides to enrage the king against Erling." Stein thus remained there all winter (A.D. 1027).

After Yule a king's messenger came to Thorberg, with the order that Thorberg should come to him before midsummer; and the order was serious and severe. Thorberg laid it before his friends, and asked their advice if he should venture to go to the king after what had taken place. The greater number dissuaded him, and thought it more advisable to let Stein slip out of his hands than to venture within the king's power: but Thorberg himself had rather more inclination not to decline the journey. Soon after Thorberg went to his brother Fin, told him the circumstances, and asked him to accompany him. Fin replied, that he thought it foolish to be so completely under woman's influence that he dared not, on account of his wife, keep the fealty and law of his sovereign.

"Thou art free," replied Thorberg, "to go with me or not; but I believe it is more fear of the king than love to him that keeps thee back." And so they parted in anger.

Then Thorberg went to his brother Arne Arnason, and asked him to go with him to the king. Arne says, "It appears to me wonderful that such a sensible, prudent man, should fall into such a misfortune, without necessity, as to incur the king's indignation. It might be excused if it were thy relation or foster-brother whom thou hadst thus sheltered; but not at all that thou shouldst take up an Iceland man, and harbour the king's outlaw, to the injury of thyself and all thy relations."

Thorberg replies, "It stands good, according to the proverb,—a rotten branch will be found in every tree. My father's greatest misfortune evidently was that he had such ill luck in producing sons that at last he produced one incapable of acting, and without any resemblance to our race, and whom in truth I never would have called brother, if it were not that it would have been to my mother's shame to have refused."

Thorberg turned away in a gloomy temper, and went home. Thenceforward he sent a message to his brother Kalf in the Throndhjem district, and begged him to meet him at Agdanes; and when the messengers found Kalf he promised, without more ado, to make the journey. Ragnhild sent men east to Jarar to her father Erling, and begged him to send people. Erling's sons, Sigurd and Thord, came out, each with a ship of twenty benches of rowers and ninety men. When they came north Thorberg received them joyfully, entertained them well, and prepared for the voyage with them. Thorberg had also a vessel with twenty benches, and they steered their course northwards. When they came to the mouth of the Throndhjem fjord Thorberg's two brothers, Fin and Arne, were there already, with two ships each of twenty benches. Thorberg met his brothers with joy, and observed that his whetstone had taken effect; and Fin replied he seldom needed sharpening for such work. Then they proceeded north with all their forces to Throndhjem, and Stein was along with them. When they came to Agdanes, Kalf Arnason was there before them; and he also had a wellmanned ship of twenty benches. With this war-force they sailed up to Nidaros, where they lay all night. The morning after they had a consultation with each other. Kalf and Erling's sons

were for attacking the town with all their forces, and leaving the event to fate; but Thorberg wished that they should first proceed with moderation, and make an offer; in which opinion Fin and Arne also concurred. It was accordingly resolved that Fin and Arne, with a few men, should first wait upon the king. The king had previously heard that they had come so strong in men, and was therefore very sharp in his speech. Fin offered to pay mulct for Thorberg, and also for Stein, and bade the king to fix what the penalties should be, however large; stipulating only for Thorberg's safety and his fiefs, and for Stein's life and limb.

The king replies, "It appears to me that ye come from home so equipped that ye can determine half as much as I can myself, or more; but this I expected least of all from you brothers, that ye should come against me with an army; and this counsel, I can observe, has its origin from the people of Jarar; but ye have no occasion to offer me money in mulct."

Fin replies, "We brothers have collected men, not to offer hostility to you, sire, but to offer rather our services; but if you will bear down Thorberg altogether, we must all go to King Canute the Great with such forces as we have."

Then the king looked at him, and said, "If ye brothers will give your oaths that ye will follow me in the country and out of the country, and not part from me without my leave and permission, and shall not conceal from me any treasonable design that may come to your knowledge against me, then will I agree to a peace with you brothers."

Then Fin returned to his forces, and told the conditions which the king had proposed to them. Now they held a council upon it, and Thorberg, for his part, said he would accept the terms offered. "I have no wish," says he, "to fly from my property, and seek foreign masters; but, on the contrary, will always consider it an honour to follow King Olaf, and be where he is." Then says Kalf, "I will make no oath to King Olaf, but will be with him always, so long as I retain my fiefs and dignities, and so long as the king will be my friend; and my opinion is that we should all do the same." Fin says, "we will venture to let King Olaf himself determine in this matter." Arne Arnason says, "I was resolved to follow thee, brother Thorberg, even if thou hadst given battle to King Olaf, and I shall certainly not leave thee for listening to better counsel; so I intend to follow thee and Fin, and accept the conditions ye have taken."

Thereupon the brothers Thorberg, Fin, and Arne, went on board a vessel, rowed into the fjord, and waited upon the king. The agreement went accordingly into fulfillment, so that the brothers gave their oaths to the king. Then Thorberg endeavored to make peace for Stein with the king; but the king replied that Stein might for him depart in safety, and go where he pleased, but "in my house he can never be again." Then Thorberg and his brothers went back to their men. Kalf went to Eggja, and Fin to the king; and Thorberg, with the other men, went south to their homes. Stein went with Erling's sons; but early in the spring (A.D. 1027) he went west to England into the service of Canute the Great, and was long with him, and was treated with great distinction.

149. FIN ARNASON'S EXPEDITION TO HALOGALAND.

Now when Fin Arnason had been a short time with King Olaf, the king called him to a conference, along with some other persons he usually held consultation with; and in this conference the king spoke to this effect:—"The decision remains fixed in my mind that in spring I should raise the whole country to a levy both of men and ships, and then proceed, with all the force I can muster, against King Canute the Great: for I know for certain that he does not intend to treat as a jest the claim he has awakened upon my kingdom. Now I let thee know my will, Fin Arnason, that thou proceed on my errand to Halogaland, and raise the people there to an expedition, men and ships, and summon that force to meet me at Agdanes." Then the king named other men whom he sent to Throndhjem, and some southwards in the country, and he commanded that this order should be circulated through the whole land. Of Fin's voyage we have to relate that he had with him a ship with about thirty men, and when he was ready for sea he

prosecuted his journey until he came to Halogaland. There he summoned the bondes to a Thing, laid before them his errand, and craved a levy. The bondes in that district had large vessels, suited to a levy expedition, and they obeyed the king's message, and rigged their ships. Now when Fin came farther north in Halogaland he held a Thing again, and sent some of his men from him to crave a levy where he thought it necessary. He sent also men to Bjarkey Island to Thorer Hund, and there, as elsewhere, craved the quota to the levy. When the message came to Thorer he made himself ready, and manned with his house-servants the same vessel he had sailed with on his cruise to Bjarmaland, and which he equipped at his own expense. Fin summoned all the people of Halogaland who were to the north to meet at Vagar. There came a great fleet together in spring, and they waited there until Fin returned from the North. Thorer Hund had also come there. When Fin arrived he ordered the signal to sound for all the people of the levy to attend a House-Thing; and at it all the men produced their weapons, and also the fighting men from each ship-district were mustered. When that was all finished Fin said, "I have also to bring thee a salutation, Thorer Hund, from King Olaf, and to ask thee what thou wilt offer him for the murder of his court-man Karle, or for the robbery in taking the king's goods north in Lengjuvik. I have the king's orders to settle that business, and I wait thy answer to it."

Thorer looked about him, and saw standing on both sides many fully armed men, among whom were Gunstein and others of Karle's kindred. Then said Thorer, "My proposal is soon made. I will refer altogether to the king's pleasure the matter he thinks he has against me."

Fin replies, "Thou must put up with a less honour; for thou must refer the matter altogether to my decision, if any agreement is to take place."

Thorer replies, "And even then I think it will stand well with my case, and therefore I will not decline referring it to thee."

Thereupon Thorer came forward, and confirmed what he said by giving his hand upon it; and Fin repeated first all the words he should say.

Fin now pronounced his decision upon the agreement,—that Thorer should pay to the king ten marks of gold, and to Gunstein and the other kindred ten marks, and for the robbery and loss of goods ten marks more; and all which should be paid immediately.

Thorer says, "This is a heavy money mulct."

"Without it," replies Fin, "there will be no agreement."

Thorer says, there must time be allowed to gather so much in loan from his followers; but Fin told him to pay immediately on the spot; and besides, Thorer should lay down the great ornament which he took from Karle when he was dead. Thorer asserted that he had not got the ornament. Then Gunstein pressed forward, and said that Karle had the ornament around his neck when they parted, but it was gone when they took up his corpse. Thorer said he had not observed any ornament; but if there was any such thing, it must be lying at home in Bjarkey. Then Fin put the point of his spear to Thorer's breast, and said that he must instantly produce the ornament; on which Thorer took the ornament from his neck and gave it to Fin. Thereafter Thorer turned away, and went on board his ship. Fin, with many other men, followed him, went through the whole vessel, and took up the hatches. At the mast they saw two very large casks; and Fin asked, "What are these puncheons?"

Thorer replies, "It is my liquor."

Fin says, "Why don't you give us something to drink then, comrade, since you have so much liquor?"

Thorer ordered his men to run off a bowlfull from the puncheons, from which Fin and his people got liquor of the best quality. Now Fin ordered Thorer to pay the mulcts. Thorer went backwards and forwards through the ship, speaking now to the one, now to the other, and Fin calling out to produce the pence. Thorer begged him to go to the shore, and said he would bring the money there, and Fin with his men went on shore. Then Thorer came and paid silver; of which, from one purse, there were weighed ten marks. Thereafter Thorer brought many knotted nightcaps; and in some was one mark, in others half a mark, and in others some small money. "This is money my friends and other good people

have lent me," said he; "for I think all my travelling money is gone." Then Thorer went back again to his ship, and returned, and paid the silver by little and little; and this lasted so long that the day was drawing towards evening. When the Thing had closed the people had gone to their vessels, and made ready to depart; and as fast as they were ready they hoisted sail and set out, so that most of them were under sail. When Fin saw that they were most of them under sail, he ordered his men to get ready too; but as yet little more than a third part of the mulct had been paid. Then Fin said, "This goes on very slowly, Thorer, with the payment. I see it costs thee a great deal to pay money. I shall now let it stand for the present, and what remains thou shalt pay to the king himself." Fin then got up and went away.

Thorer replies, "I am well enough pleased, Fin, to part now; but the good will is not wanting to pay this debt, so that both thou and the king shall say it is not unpaid."

Then Fin went on board his ship, and followed the rest of his fleet. Thorer was late before he was ready to come out of the harbour. When the sails were hoisted he steered out over Westfjord, and went to sea, keeping south along the land so far off that the hill-tops were half sunk, and soon the land altogether was sunk from view by the sea. Thorer held this course until he got into the English sea, and landed in England. He betook himself to King Canute forthwith, and was well received by him. It then came out that Thorer had with him a great deal of property; and, with other things, all the money he and Karle had taken in Bjarmaland. In the great liquor-casks there were sides within the outer sides, and the liquor was between them. The rest of the casks were filled with furs, and beaver and sable skins. Thorer was then with King Canute. Fin came with his forces to King Olaf, and related to him how all had gone upon his voyage, and told at the same time his suspicion that Thorer had left the country, and gone west to England to King Canute. "And there I fear he will cause as much trouble."

The king replies, "I believe that Thorer must be our enemy, and it appears to me always better to have him at a distance than near."

150. DISPUTE BETWEEN HAREK AND ASMUND.

Asmund Grankelson had been this winter (A.D. 1027) in Halogaland in his sherifffdom, and was at home with his father Grankel. There lies a rock out in the sea, on which there is both seal and bird catching, and a fishing ground, and egg-gathering; and from old times it had been an appendage to the farm which Grankel owned, but now Harek of Thjotta laid claim to it. It had gone so far, that some years he had taken by force all the gain of this rock; but Asmund and his father thought that they might expect the king's help in all cases in which the right was upon their side. Both father and son went therefore in spring to Harek, and brought him a message and tokens from King Olaf that he should drop his claim. Harek answered Asmund crossly, because he had gone to the king with such insinuations—"for the just right is upon my side. Thou shouldst learn moderation, Asmund, although thou hast so much confidence in the king's favour. It has succeeded with thee to kill some chiefs, and leave their slaughter unpaid for by any mulct; and also to plunder us, although we thought ourselves at least equal to all of equal birth, and thou art far from being my equal in family."

Asmund replies, "Many have experienced from thee, Harek, that thou art of great connections, and too great power; and many in consequence have suffered loss in their property through thee. But it is likely that now thou must turn thyself elsewhere, and not against us with thy violence, and not go altogether against law, as thou art now doing." Then they separated.

Harek sent ten or twelve of his house-servants with a large rowing boat, with which they rowed to the rock, took all that was to be got upon it, and loaded their boat. But when they were ready to return home, Asmund Grankelson came with thirty men, and ordered them to give up all they had taken. Harek's house-servants were not quick in complying, so that Asmund attacked them. Some of Harek's men were cudgelled, some wounded, some thrown into the sea, and all they had caught was taken from on

board of their boat, and Asmund and his people took it along with them. Then Harek's servants came home, and told him the event. Harek replies, "That is called news indeed that seldom happens; never before has it happened that my people have been beaten."

The matter dropped. Harek never spoke about it, but was very cheerful. In spring, however, Harek rigged out a cutter of twenty seats of rowers, and manned it with his house-servants, and the ship was remarkably well fitted out both with people and all necessary equipment; and Harek went to the levy; but when he came to King Olaf, Asmund was there before him. The king summoned Harek and Asmund to him, and reconciled them so that they left the matter entirely to him. Asmund then produced witnesses to prove that Grankel had owned the rock, and the king gave judgment accordingly. The case had a one-sided result. No mulct was paid for Harek's house-servants, and the rock was declared to be Grankel's. Harek observed it was no disgrace to obey the king's decision, whatever way the case itself was decided.

151. THOROD'S STORY.

Thorod Snorrason had remained in Norway, according to King Olaf's commands, when Geller Thorkelson got leave to go to Iceland, as before related. He remained there (A.D. 1027) with King Olaf, but was ill pleased that he was not free to travel where he pleased. Early in winter, King Olaf, when he was in Nidaros, made it known that he would send people to Jamtaland to collect the scat; but nobody had any great desire to go on this business, after the fate of those whom King Olaf had sent before, namely, Thrond White and others, twelve in number, who lost their lives, as before related; and the Jamtalanders had ever since been subject to the Swedish king. Thorod Snorrason now offered to undertake this journey, for he cared little what became of him if he could but become his own master again. The king consented, and Thorod set out with eleven men in company. They came east to Jamtaland, and went to a man called Thorar, who was lagman, and a person in high estimation. They met with a hospitable reception; and when they had been there a while, they explained their business to Thorar. He replied, that other men and chiefs of the country had in all respects as much power and right to give an answer as he had, and for that purpose he would call together a Thing. It was so done; the message-token was sent out, and a numerous Thing assembled. Thorar went to the Thing, but the messengers in the meantime remained at home. At the Thing, Thorar laid the business before the people, but all were unanimous that no scat should be paid to the king of Norway; and some were for hanging the messengers, others for sacrificing them to the gods. At last it was resolved to hold them fast until the king of Sweden's sheriffs arrived, and they could treat them as they pleased with consent of the people; and that, in the meantime, this decision should be concealed, and the messengers treated well, and detained under pretext that they must wait until the scat is collected; and that they should be separated, and placed two and two, as if for the convenience of boarding them. Thorod and another remained in Thorar's house. There was a great Yule feast and ale-drinking, to which each brought his own liquor; for there were many peasants in the village, who all drank in company together at Yule. There was another village not far distant, where Thorar's brother-in-law dwelt, who was a rich and powerful man, and had a grown-up son. The brothers-in-law intended to pass the Yule in drinking feasts, half of it at the house of the one and half with the other; and the feast began at Thorar's house. The brothers-in-law drank together, and Thorod and the sons of the peasants by themselves; and it was a drinking match. In the evening words arose, and comparisons between the men of Sweden and of Norway, and then between their kings both of former times and at the present, and of the manslaughters and robberies that had taken place between the countries. Then said the peasants sons, "If our king has lost most people, his sheriffs will make it even with the lives of twelve men when they come from the south after Yule; and ye little know, ye silly fools, why ye are kept here." Thorod took notice of these words, and many made jest about it, and scoffed at them and their king. When the ale began to talk out of the hearts of the Jamtalanders, what Thorod had before long suspected be-

came evident. The day after Thorod and his comrade took all their clothes and weapons, and laid them ready; and at night, when the people were all asleep, they fled to the forest. The next morning, when the Jamtalanders were aware of their flight, men set out after them with dogs to trace them, and found them in a wood in which they had concealed themselves. They brought them home to a room in which there was a deep cellar, into which they were thrown, and the door locked upon them. They had little meat, and only the clothes they had on them. In the middle of Yule, Thorar, with all his freeborn men, went to his brother's-in-law, where he was to be a guest until the last of Yule. Thorar's slaves were to keep guard upon the cellar, and they were provided with plenty of liquor; but as they observed no moderation in drinking, they became towards evening confused in the head with the ale. As they were quite drunk, those who had to bring meat to the prisoners in the cellar said among themselves that they should want for nothing. Thorod amused the slaves by singing to them. They said he was a clever man, and gave him a large candle that was lighted; and the slaves who were in went to call the others to come in; but they were all so confused with the ale, that in going out they neither locked the cellar nor the room after them. Now Thorod and his comrades tore up their skin clothes in strips, knotted them together, made a noose at one end, and threw up the rope on the floor of the room. It fastened itself around a chest, by which they tried to haul themselves up. Thorod lifted up his comrade until he stood on his shoulders, and from thence scrambled up through the hatchhole. There was no want of ropes in the chamber, and he threw a rope down to Thorod; but when he tried to draw him up, he could not move him from the spot. Then Thorod told him to cast the rope over a cross-beam that was in the house, make a loop in it, and place as much wood and stones in the loop as would outweigh him; and the heavy weight went down into the cellar, and Thorod was drawn up by it. Now they took as much clothes as they required in the room; and among other things they took some reindeer hides, out of which they cut sandals, and bound them under their feet, with the hoofs of the reindeer feet trailing behind. But before they set off they set fire to a large corn barn which was close by, and then ran out into the pitch-dark night. The barn blazed, and set fire to many other houses in the village. Thorod and his comrade travelled the whole night until they came to a lonely wood, where they concealed themselves when it was daylight. In the morning they were missed. There was chase made with dogs to trace the footsteps all round the house; but the hounds always came back to the house, for they had the smell of the reindeer hoofs, and followed the scent back on the road that the hoofs had left, and therefore could not find the right direction. Thorod and his comrade wandered long about in the desert forest, and came one evening to a small house, and went in. A man and a woman were sitting by the fire. The man called himself Thorer, and said it was his wife who was sitting there, and the hut belonged to them. The peasant asked them to stop there, at which they were well pleased. He told them that he had come to this place, because he had fled from the inhabited district on account of a murder. Thorod and his comrade were well received, and they all got their supper at the fireside; and then the benches were cleared for them, and they lay down to sleep, but the fire was still burning with a clear light. Thorod saw a man come in from another house, and never had he seen so stout a man. He was dressed in a scarlet cloak beset with gold clasps, and was of very handsome appearance. Thorod heard him scold them for taking guests, when they had scarcely food for themselves. The housewife said, "Be not angry, brother; seldom such a thing happens; and rather do them some good too, for thou hast better opportunity to do so than we." Thorod heard also the stout man named by the name of Arnliot Gelline, and observed that the woman of the house was his sister. Thorod had heard speak of Arnliot as the greatest-of robbers and malefactors. Thorod and his companion slept the first part of the night, for they were wearied with walking; but when a third of the night was still to come, Arnliot awoke them, told them to get up, and make ready to depart. They arose immediately, put on their clothes, and some breakfast was given them; and Arnliot gave each of them also a pair of skees. Arnliot made himself ready to accompany them, and got upon his

skees, which were both broad and long; but scarcely had he swung his skee-staff before he was a long way past them. He waited for them, and said they would make no progress in this way, and told them to stand upon the edge of his skees beside him. They did so. Thorod stood nearest to him, and held by Arnliot's belt, and his comrade held by him. Arnliot strode on as quickly with them both, as if he was alone and without any weight. The following day they came, towards night, to a lodge for travellers, struck fire, and prepared some food; but Arnliot told them to throw away nothing of their food, neither bones nor crumbs. Arnliot took a silver plate out of the pocket of his cloak, and ate from it. When they were done eating, Arnliot gathered up the remains of their meal, and they prepared to go to sleep. In the other end of the house there was a loft upon cross-beams, and Arnliot and the others went up, and laid themselves down to sleep. Arnliot had a large halberd, of which the upper part was mounted with gold, and the shaft was so long that with his arm stretched out he could scarcely touch the top of it; and he was girt with a sword. They had both their weapons and their clothes up in the loft beside them. Arnliot, who lay outermost in the loft, told them to be perfectly quiet. Soon after twelve men came to the house, who were merchants going with their wares to Jamtaland; and when they came into the house they made a great disturbance, were merry, and made a great fire before them; and when they took their supper they cast away all the bones around them. They then prepared to go to sleep, and laid themselves down upon the benches around the fire. When they, had been asleep a short time, a huge witch came into the house; and when she came in, she carefully swept together all the bones and whatever was of food kind into a heap, and threw it into her mouth. Then she gripped the man who was nearest to her, riving and tearing him asunder, and threw him upon the fire. The others awoke in dreadful fright, and sprang up, but she took them, and put them one by one to death, so that only one remained in life. He ran under the loft calling for help, and if there was any one on the loft to help him. Arnliot reached down his hand, seized him by the shoulder, and drew him up into the loft. The witch-wife had turned towards the fire, and began to eat the men who were roasting. Now Arnliot stood up, took his halberd, and struck her between the shoulders, so that the point came out at her breast. She writhed with it, gave a dreadful shriek, and sprang up. The halberd slipped from Arnliot's hands, and she ran out with it. Arnliot then went in; cleared away the dead corpses out of the house; set the door and the door-posts up, for she had torn them down in going out; and they slept the rest of the night. When the day broke they got up; and first they took their breakfast. When they had got food, Arnliot said, "Now we must part here. Ye can proceed upon the new-traced path the merchants have made in coming here yesterday. In the meantime I will seek after my halberd, and in reward for my labour I will take so much of the goods these men had with them as I find useful to me. Thou, Thorod, must take my salutation to King Olaf; and say to him that he is the man I am most desirous to see, although my salutation may appear to him of little worth." Then he took his silver plate, wiped it dry with a cloth, and said, "Give King Olaf this plate; salute him, and say it is from me." Then they made themselves ready for their journey, and parted. Thorod went on with his comrade and the man of the merchants company who had escaped. He proceeded until he came to King Olaf in the town (Nidaros); told the king all that had happened, and presented to him the silver plate. The king said it was wrong that Arnliot himself had not come to him; "for it is a pity so brave a hero, and so distinguished a man, should have given himself up to misdeeds."

Thorod remained the rest of the winter with the king, and in summer got leave to return to Iceland; and he and King Olaf parted the best of friends.

152. KING OLAF'S LEVY OF MEN.

King Olaf made ready in spring (A.D. 1027) to leave Nidaros, and many people were assembled about him, both from Thronðhjelm and the Northern country; and when he was ready he proceeded first with his men to More, where he gathered the men of the levy, and did the same at Raumsdal. He went from thence to South

More. He lay a long time at the Herey Isles waiting for his forces; and he often held House-things, as many reports came to his ears about which he thought it necessary to hold councils. In one of these Things he made a speech, in which he spoke of the loss he suffered from the Farey islanders. "The scat which they promised me," he said, "is not forthcoming; and I now intend to send men thither after it." Then he proposed to different men to undertake this expedition; but the answer was, that all declined the adventure.

Then there stood up a stout and very remarkable looking man in the Thing. He was clad in a red kirtle, had a helmet on his head, a sword in his belt, and a large halberd in his hands. He took up the word and said, "In truth here is a great want of men. Ye have a good king; but ye are bad servants who say no to this expedition he offers you, although ye have received many gifts of friendship and tokens of honour from him. I have hitherto been no friend of the king, and he has been my enemy, and says, besides, that he has good grounds for being so. Now, I offer, sire, to go upon this expedition, if no better will undertake it."

The king answers, "Who is this brave man who replies to my offer? Thou showest thyself different from the other men here present, in offering thyself for this expedition from which they excuse themselves, although I expected they would willingly have undertaken it; but I do not know thee in the least, and do not know thy name."

He replies, "My name, sire, is not difficult to know, and I think thou hast heard my name before. I am Karl Morske."

The king—"So this is Karl! I have indeed heard thy name before; and, to say the truth, there was a time when our meeting must have been such, if I had had my will; that thou shouldst not have had to tell it now. But I will not show myself worse than thou, but will join my thanks and my favour to the side of the help thou hast offered me. Now thou shalt come to me, Karl, and be my guest to-day; and then we shall consult together about this business." Karl said it should be so.

153. KARL MORSKE'S STORY.

Karl Morske had been a viking, and a celebrated robber. Often had the king sent out men against him, and wished to make an end of him; but Karl, who was a man of high connection, was quick in all his doing's, and besides a man of great dexterity, and expert in all feats. Now when Karl had undertaken this business the king was reconciled to him, gave him his friendship, and let him be fitted out in the best manner for this expedition. There were about twenty men in the ship; and the king sent messages to his friends in the Farey Islands, and recommended him also to Leif Ossurson and Lagman Gille, for aid and defence; and for this purpose furnished Karl with tokens of the full powers given him. Karl set out as soon as he was ready; and as he got a favourable breeze soon came to the Farey Islands, and landed at Thorshavn, in the island Straumey. A Thing was called, to which there came a great number of people. Thrand of Gata came with a great retinue, and Leif and Gille came there also, with many in their following. After they had set up their tents, and put themselves in order, they went to Karl Morske, and saluted each other on both sides in a friendly way. Then Karl produced King Olaf's words, tokens, and friendly message to Leif and Gille, who received them in a friendly manner, invited Karl to come to them, and promised him to support his errand, and give him all the aid in their power, for which he thanked them. Soon after came Thrand of Gata, who also received Karl in the most friendly manner, and said he was glad to see so able a man coming to their country on the king's business, which they were all bound to promote. "I will insist, Karl," says he, "on thy taking-up thy winter abode with me, together with all those of thy people who may appear to thee necessary for thy dignity."

Karl replies, that he had already settled to lodge with Leif; "otherwise I would with great pleasure have accepted thy invitation."

"Then fate has given great honour to Leif," says Thrand; "but is there any other way in which I can be of service?"

Karl replies, that he would do him a great service by collecting the scat of the eastern island, and of all the northern islands.

Thrand said it was both his duty and interest to assist in the king's business, and thereupon Thrand returned to his tent; and at that Thing nothing else worth speaking of occurred. Karl took up his abode with Leif Ossurson, and was there all winter (A.D. 1028). Leif collected the scat of Straumey Island, and all the islands south of it. The spring after Thrand of Gata fell ill, and had sore eyes and other complaints; but he prepared to attend the Thing, as was his custom. When he came to the Thing he had his tent put up, and within it another black tent, that the light might not penetrate. After some days of the Thing had passed, Leif and Karl came to Thrand's tent, with a great many people, and found some persons standing outside. They asked if Thrand was in the tent, and were told he was. Leif told them to bid Thrand come out, as he and Karl had some business with him. They came back, and said that Thrand had sore eyes, and could not come out; "but he begs thee, Leif, to come to him within." Leif told his comrades to come carefully into the tent, and not to press forward, and that he who came last in should go out first. Leif went in first, followed by Karl, and then his comrades; and all fully armed as if they were going into battle. Leif went into the black tent and asked if Thrand was there. Thrand answered and saluted Leif. Leif returned his salutation, and asked if he had brought the scat from the northern islands, and if he would pay the scat that had been collected. Thrand replies, that he had not forgotten what had been spoken of between him and Karl, and that he would now pay over the scat. "Here is a purse, Leif, full of silver, which thou canst receive." Leif looked around, and saw but few people in the tent, of whom some were lying upon the benches, and a few were sitting up. Then Leif went to Thrand, and took the purse, and carried it into the outer tent, where it was light, turned out the money on his shield, groped about in it with his hand, and told Karl to look at the silver. When they had looked at it a while, Karl asked Leif what he thought of the silver. He replied, "I am thinking where the bad money that is in the north isles can have come from." Thrand heard this, and said, "Do you not think, Leif, the silver is good?" "No," says he. Thrand replies, "Our relations, then, are rascals not to be trusted. I sent them in spring to collect the scat in the north isles, as I could not myself go anywhere, and they have allowed themselves to be bribed by the bondes to take false money, which nobody looks upon as current and good; it is better, therefore, Leif, to look at this silver which has been paid me as land-rent." Leif thereupon carried back this silver, and received another bag, which he carried to Karl, and they looked over the money together. Karl asked Leif what he thought of this money. He answered, that it appeared to him so bad that it would not be taken in payment, however little hope there might be of getting a debt paid in any other way: "therefore I will not take this money upon the king's account." A man who had been lying on the bench now cast the skin coverlet off which he had drawn over his head, and said, "True is the old word,—he grows worse who grows older: so it is with thee, Thrand, who allowest Karl Morske to handle thy money all the day." This was Gaut the Red. Thrand sprang up at Gaut's words, and reprimanded his relation with many angry words. At last he said that Leif should leave this silver, and take a bag which his own peasants had brought him in spring. "And although I am weak-sighted, yet my own hand is the truest test." Another man who was lying on the bench raised himself now upon his elbow; and this was Thord the Low. He said, "These are no ordinary reproaches we suffer from Karl Morske, and therefore he well deserves a reward for them." Leif in the meantime took the bag, and carried it to Karl; and when they cast their eyes on the money, Leif said, "We need not look long at this silver, for here the one piece of money is better than the other; and this is the money we will have. Let a man come to be present at the counting it out." Thrand says that he thought Leif was the fittest man to do it upon his account. Leif and Karl thereupon went a short way from the tent, sat down, and counted and weighed the silver. Karl took the helmet off his head, and received in it the weighed silver. They saw a man coming to them who had a stick with an axe-head on it in his hand, a hat low upon his head, and a short green cloak. He was bare-legged, and had linen breeches on tied at the knee. He laid his stick down in the field, and went to Karl and said, "Take care, Karl Morske, that thou does not hurt thyself

against my axe-stick." Immediately a man came running and calls with great haste to Leif Ossurson, telling him to come as quickly as possible to Lagman Gille's tent; "for," says he, "Sirurd Thorlaksson ran in just now into the mouth of the tent, and gave one of Gille's men a desperate wound." Leif rose up instantly, and went off to Gille's tent along with his men. Karl remained sitting, and the Norway people stood around in all corners. Gaut immediately sprang up, and struck with a hand-axe over the heads of the people, and the stroke came on Karl's head; but the wound was slight. Thord the Low seized the stick-axe, which lay in the field at his side, and struck the axe-blade right into Karl's skull. Many people now streamed out of Thrand's tent. Karl was carried away dead. Thrand was much grieved at this event, and offered money-mulcts for his relations; but Leif and Gille, who had to prosecute the business, would accept no mulct. Sigurd was banished the country for having wounded Gille's tent comrade, and Gaut and Thord for the murder of Karl. The Norway people rigged out the vessel which Karl had with him, and sailed eastward to Olaf, and gave him these tidings. He was in no pleasant humour at it, and threatened a speedy vengeance; but it was not allotted by fate to King Olaf to revenge himself on Thrand and his relations, because of the hostilities which had begun in Norway, and which are now to be related. And there is nothing more to be told of what happened after King Olaf sent men to the Farey Islands to take scat of them. But great strife arose after Karl's death in the Farey Islands between the family of Thrand of Gata and Leif Ossurson, and of which there are great sagas.

154. KING OLAF'S EXPEDITION WITH HIS LEVY.

Now we must proceed with the relation we began before,—that King Olaf set out with his men, and raised a levy over the whole country (A.D. 1027). All lendermen in the North followed him excepting Einar Tambaskelfer, who sat quietly at home upon his farm since his return to the country, and did not serve the king. Einar had great estates and wealth, although he held no fiefs from the king, and he lived splendidly. King Olaf sailed with his fleet south around Stad, and many people from the districts around joined him. King Olaf himself had a ship which he had got built the winter before (A.D. 1027), and which was called the Visund. It was a very large ship, with a bison's head gilded all over upon the bow. Sigvat the skald speaks thus of it:—

Trygvason's Long Serpent bore,
Grim gaping o'er the waves before,
A dragon's head with open throat,
When last the hero was afloat:
His cruise was closed,
As God disposed.
Olaf has raised a bison's head,
Which proudly seems the waves to tread.
While o'er its golden forehead dashing
The waves its glittering horns are washing:
May God dispose
A luckier close.

The king went on to Hordaland; there he heard the news that Erling Skjalgsson had left the country with a great force, and four or five ships. He himself had a large war-ship, and his sons had three of twenty rowing-banks each; and they had sailed westward to England to Canute the Great. Then King Olaf sailed eastward along the land with a mighty war-force, and he inquired everywhere if anything was known of Canute's proceedings; and all agreed in saying he was in England but added that he was fitting out a levy, and intended coming to Norway. As Olaf had a large fleet, and could not discover with certainty where he should go to meet King Canute, and as his people were dissatisfied with lying quiet in one place with so large an armament, he resolved to sail with his fleet south to Denmark, and took with him all the men who were best appointed and most warlike; and he gave leave to the others to return home. Now the people whom he thought of little use having gone home, King Olaf had many excellent and stout men-at-arms besides those who, as before related, had fled the country, or sat quietly at home; and most of the chief men and lendermen of Norway were along with him.

155. OF KING OLAF AND KING ONUND.

When King Olaf sailed to Denmark, he set his course for Seeland; and when he came there he made incursions on the land, and began to plunder. The country people were severely treated; some were killed, some bound and dragged to the ships. All who could do so took to flight, and made no opposition. King Olaf committed there the greatest ravages. While Olaf was in Seeland, the news came that King Onund Olafson of Sweden had raised a levy, and fallen upon Scania, and was ravaging there; and then it became known what the resolution had been that the two kings had taken at the Gaut river, where they had concluded a union and friendship, and had bound themselves to oppose King Canute. King Onund continued his march until he met his brother-in-law King Olaf. When they met they made proclamation both to their own people and to the people of the country, that they intended to conquer Denmark; and asked the support of the people of the country for this purpose. And it happened, as we find examples of everywhere, that if hostilities are brought upon the people of a country not strong enough to withstand, the greatest number will submit to the conditions by which peace can be purchased at any rate. So it happened here that many men went into the service of the kings, and agreed to submit to them. Wheresoever they went they laid the country all round subjection to them, and otherwise laid waste all with fire and sword.

Of this foray Sigvat the skald speaks, in a ballad he composed concerning King Canute the Great:—

"Canute is on the sea!
The news is told,
And the Norsemen bold
Repeat it with great glee.
And it runs from mouth to mouth—
'On a lucky day
We came away
From Thronthjem to the south.'
Across the cold East sea,
The Swedish king
His host did bring,
To gain great victory.
King Onund came to fight,
In Seeland's plains,
Against the Danes,
With his steel-clad men so bright.
Canute is on the land;
Side to side
His long-ships ride
Along the yellow strand.
Where waves wash the green banks,
Mast to mast,
All bound fast,
His great fleet lies in ranks.

156. OF KING CANUTE THE GREAT.

King Canute had heard in England that King Olaf of Norway had called out a levy, and had gone with his forces to Denmark, and was making great ravages in his dominions there. Canute began to gather people, and he had speedily collected a great army and a numerous fleet. Earl Hakon was second in command over the whole.

Sigvat the skald came this summer (A.D. 1027) from the West, from Ruda (Rouen) in Valland, and with him was a man called Berg. They had made a merchant voyage there the summer before. Sigvat had made a little poem about this journey, called "The Western Traveller's Song," which begins thus:—

Berg! many a merry morn was pass'd,
When our vessel was made fast,
And we lay on the glittering tide
or Rouen river's western side.

When Sigvat came to England he went directly to King Canute, and asked his leave to proceed to Norway; for King Canute had forbidden all merchant vessels to sail until he himself was ready with his fleet. When Sigvat arrived he went to the house in which the king was lodged; but the doors were locked, and he had to stand a long time outside, but when he got admittance he obtained the permission he desired. He then sang:—

The way to Jutland's king I sought;
A little patience I was taught.
The doors were shut—all full within;

The udaller could not get in.
But Gorm's great son did condescend
To his own chamber me to send,
And grant my prayer—although I'm one
Whose arms the fetters' weight have known.

When Sigvat became aware that King Canute was equipping an armament against King Olaf, and knew what a mighty force King Canute had, he made these lines:—

The mighty Canute, and Earl Hakon,
Have leagued themselves, and counsel taken
Against King Olaf's life,
And are ready for the strife.
In spite of king and earl, I say,
'I love him well—may he get away.'
On the Fields, wild and dreary,
With him I'd live, and ne'er be weary.

Sigvat made many other songs concerning this expedition of Canute and Hakon. He made this among others:—

'Twas not the earl's intention then
'Twixt Olaf and the udalmen
Peace to establish, and the land
Upright to hold with Northman's hand;
But ever with deceit and lies
Eirik's descendant, Hakon, tries
To make ill-will and discontent,
Till all the udalmen are bent
Against King Olaf's rule to rise.

157. OF KING CANUTE'S SHIP THE DRAGON.

Canute the Great was at last ready with his fleet, and left the land; and a vast number of men he had, and ships frightfully large. He himself had a dragon-ship, so large that it had sixty banks of rowers, and the head was gilt all over. Earl Hakon had another dragon of forty banks, and it also had a gilt figure-head. The sails of both were in stripes of blue, red, and green, and the vessels were painted all above the water-stroke; and all that belonged to their equipment was most splendid. They had also many other huge ships remarkably well fitted out, and grand. Sigvat the skald talks of this in his song on Canute:—

Canute is out beneath the sky—
Canute of the clear blue eye!
The king is out on the ocean's breast,
Leading his grand fleet from the West.
On to the East the ship-masts glide,
Glancing and bright each long-ship's side.
The conqueror of great Ethelred,
Canute, is there, his foemen's dread:
His dragon with her sails of blue,
All bright and brilliant to the view,
High hoisted on the yard arms wide,
Carries great Canute o'er the tide.
Brave is the royal progress—fast
The proud ship's keel obeys the mast,
Dashes through foam, and gains the land,
Raising a surge on Limfjord's strand.

It is related that King Canute sailed with this vast force from England, and came with all his force safely to Denmark, where he went into Limfjord, and there he found gathered besides a large army of the men of the country.

158. HARDAKNUT TAKEN TO BE KING IN DENMARK.

Earl Ulf Sprakalegson had been set as protector over Denmark when King Canute went to England, and the king had intrusted his son Hardaknut in the earl's hands. This took place the summer before (A.D. 1026), as we related. But the earl immediately gave it out that King Canute had, at parting, made known to him his will and desire that the Danes should take his son Hardaknut as king over the Danish dominions. "On that account," says the earl, "he gave the matter into our hands; as I, and many other chiefs and leading men here in the country, have often complained to King Canute of the evil consequences to the country of being without a king, and that former kings thought it honour and power enough to rule over the Danish kingdom alone; and in the times that are past many kings have ruled over this kingdom. But now there are greater difficulties than have ever been before; for we have been

so fortunate hitherto as to live without disturbance from foreign kings, but now we hear the king of Norway is going to attack us, to which is added the fear of the people that the Swedish king will join him; and now King Canute is in England." The earl then produced King Canute's letter and seal, confirming all that the earl asserted. Many other chiefs supported this business; and in consequence of all these persuasions the people resolved to take Hardaknut as king, which was done at the same Thing. The Queen Emma had been principal promoter of this determination; for she had got the letter to be written, and provided with the seal, having cunningly got hold of the king's signet; but from him it was all concealed. Now when Hardaknut and Earl Ulf heard for certain that King Olaf was come from Norway with a large army, they went to Jutland, where the greatest strength of the Danish kingdom lies, sent out message-tokens, and summoned to them a great force; but when they heard the Swedish king was also come with his army, they thought they would not have strength enough to give battle to both, and therefore kept their army together in Jutland, and resolved to defend that country against the kings. The whole of their ships they assembled in Limfjord, and waited thus for King Canute. Now when they heard that King Canute had come from the West to Limfjord they sent men to him, and to Queen Emma, and begged her to find out if the king was angry at them or not, and to let them know. The queen talked over the matter with him, and said, "Your son Hardaknut will pay the full mulct the king may demand, if he has done anything which is thought to be against the king." He replies, that Hardaknut has not done this of his own judgement. "And therefore," says he, "it has turned out as might have been expected, that when he, a child, and without understanding, wanted to be called king, the country, when any evil came and an enemy appeared, must be conquered by foreign princes, if our might had not come to his aid. If he will have any reconciliation with me let him come to me, and lay down the mock title of king he has given himself." The queen sent these very words to Hardaknut, and at the same time she begged him not to decline coming; for, as she truly observed, he had no force to stand against his father. When this message came to Hardaknut he asked the advice of the earl and other chief people who were with him; but it was soon found that when the people heard King Canute the Old was arrived they all streamed to him, and seemed to have no confidence but in him alone. Then Earl Ulf and his fellows saw they had but two roads to take; either to go to the king and leave all to his mercy, or to fly the country. All pressed Hardaknut to go to his father, which advice he followed. When they met he fell at his father's feet, and laid his seal, which accompanied the kingly title, on his knee. King Canute took Hardaknut by the hand, and placed him in as high a seat as he used to sit in before. Earl Ulf sent his son Svein, who was a sister's son of King Canute, and the same age as Hardaknut, to the king. He prayed for grace and reconciliation for his father, and offered himself as hostage for the earl. King Canute ordered him to tell the earl to assemble his men and ships, and come to him, and then they would talk of reconciliation. The earl did so.

159. FORAY IN SCANIA.

When King Olaf and King Onund heard that King Canute was come from the West, and also that he had a vast force, they sailed east to Scania, and allowed themselves to ravage and burn in the districts there, and then proceeded eastward along the land to the frontier of Sweden. As soon as the country people heard that King Canute was come from the West, no one thought of going into the service of the two kings.

Now the kings sailed eastward along the coast, and brought up in a river called Helga, and remained there some time. When they heard that King Canute was coming eastward with his forces against them, they held a council; and the result was, that King Olaf with his people went up the country to the forest, and to the lake out of which the river Helga flows. There at the riverhead they made a dam of timber and turf, and dammed in the lake. They also dug a deep ditch, through which they led several waters, so that the lake waxed very high. In the river-bed they laid large logs of timber. They were many days about this work, and King Olaf

had the management of this piece of artifice; but King Onund had only to command the fleet and army. When King Canute heard of the proceedings of the two kings, and of the damage they had done to his dominions, he sailed right against them to where they lay in Helga river. He had a War-force which was one half greater than that of both the kings together. Sigvat speaks of these things:—

The king, who shields
His Jutland fields
From scaith or harm
By foeman's arm,
Will not allow
Wild plundering now:
'The greatest he,
On land or sea.'

160. BATTLE IN HELGA RIVER.

One day, towards evening, King Onund's spies saw King Canute coming sailing along, and he was not far off. Then King Onund ordered the war-horns to sound; on which his people struck their tents, put on their weapons, rowed out of the harbour and east round the land, bound their ships together, and prepared for battle. King Onund made his spies run up the country to look for King Olaf, and tell him the news. Then King Olaf broke up the dam, and let the river take its course. King Olaf travelled down in the night to his ships. When King Canute came outside the harbour, he saw the forces of the kings ready for battle. He thought that it would be too late in the day to begin the fight by the time his forces could be ready; for his fleet required a great deal of room at sea, and there was a long distance between the foremost of his ships and the hindmost, and between those outside and those nearest the land, and there was but little wind. Now, as Canute saw that the Swedes and Norwegians had quitted the harbour, he went into it with as many ships as it could hold; but the main strength of the fleet lay without the harbour. In the morning, when it was light, a great part of the men went on shore; some for amusement, some to converse with the people of other ships. They observed nothing until the water came rushing over them like a waterfall, carrying huge trees, which drove in among their ships, damaging all they struck; and the water covered all the fields. The men on shore perished, and many who were in the ships. All who could do it cut their cables; so that the ships were loose, and drove before the stream, and were scattered here and there. The great dragon, which King Canute himself was in, drove before the stream; and as it could not so easily be turned with oars, drove out among Olaf's and Onund's ships. As they knew the ship, they laid her on board on all quarters. But the ship was so high in the hull, as if it were a castle, and had besides such a numerous and chosen crew on board, well armed and exercised, that it was not easy to attack her. After a short time also Earl Ulf came up with his fleet; and then the battle began, and King Canute's fleet gathered together from all quarters. But the kings Olaf and Onund, seeing they had for this time got all the victory that fate permitted them to gain, let their ships retreat, cast themselves loose from King Canute's ship, and the fleets separated. But as the attack had not been made as King Canute had determined, he made no further attempt; and the kings on each side arranged their fleets and put their ships in order. When the fleets were parted, and each sailing its course, Olaf and Onund looked over their forces, and found they had suffered no loss of men. In the meantime they saw that if they waited until King Canute got his large fleet in order to attack them, the difference of force was so great that for them there was little chance of victory. It was also evident that if the battle was renewed, they must suffer a great loss of men. They took the resolution, therefore, to row with the whole fleet eastward along the coast. Observing that King Canute did not pursue them, they raised up their masts and set sail. Ottar Svarte tells thus of it in the poem he composed upon King Canute the Great:—

The king, in battle fray,
Drove the Swedish host away:
The wolf did not miss prey,
Nor the raven on that day.
Great Canute might deride
Two kings if he had pride,
For at Helga river's side
They would not his sword abide.

Thord Sjarekson also sang these lines in his death song of King Olaf:—

King Olaf, Agder's lord,
Ne'er shunned the Jutland king,
But with his blue-edged sword
Broke many a panzer ring.
King Canute was not slow:
King Onund filled the plain
With dead, killed by his bow:
The wolf howled o'er the slain.

161. KING OLAF AND KING ONUND'S PLANS.

King Olaf and King Onund sailed eastward to the Swedish king's dominions; and one day, towards evening, landed at a place called Barvik, where they lay all night. But then it was observed of the Swedes that they were home-sick; for the greater part of their forces sailed eastward along the land in the night, and did not stop their course until they came home to their houses. Now when King Onund observed this he ordered, as soon as the day dawned, to sound the signal for a House-thing; and the whole people went on shore, and the Thing sat down. Then King Onund took up the word, and spake thus: "So it is, King Olaf, that, as you know, we have been assembled in summer, and have forayed wide around in Denmark, and have gained much booty, but no land. I had 350 vessels, and now have not above 100 remaining with me. Now it appears to me we can make no greater progress than we have made, although you have still the 60 vessels which have followed you the whole summer. It therefore appears to me best that we come back to my kingdom; for it is always good to drive home with the wagon safe. In this expedition we have won something, and lost nothing. Now I will offer you, King Olaf, to come with me, and we shall remain assembled during the winter. Take as much of my kingdom as you will, so that you and the men who follow you may support yourselves well; and when spring comes let us take such measures as we find serviceable. If you, however, will prefer to travel across our country, and go overland to Norway, it shall be free for you to do so."

King Olaf thanked King Onund for his friendly offer. "But if I may advise," says he, "then we should take another resolution, and keep together the forces we have still remaining. I had in the first of summer, before I left Norway, 350 ships; but when I left the country I chose from among the whole war-levy those I thought to be the best, and with them I manned 60 ships; and these I still have. Now it appears to me that the part of your war-force which has now run away is the most worthless, and of least resistance; but now I see here all your chiefs and leaders, and I know well that the people who belong to the court-troops are by far the best suited to carry arms. We have here chosen men and superb ships, and we can very well lie all winter in our ships, as viking's custom is. But Canute cannot lie long in Helga river; for the harbour will not hold so many vessels as he has. If he steers eastward after us, we can escape from him, and then people will soon gather to us; but if he return to the harbours where his fleet can lie, I know for certain that the desire to return home will not be less in his army than in ours. I think, also, we have ravaged so widely in summer, that the villagers, both in Scania and in Halland, know well whose favour they have to seek. Canute's army will thus be dispersed so widely, that it is uncertain to whom fate may at the last give the victory; but let us first find out what resolution he takes."

Thus King Olaf ended his speech, and it found much applause, and his advice was followed. Spies were sent into King Canute's army, and both the kings Olaf and Onund remained lying where they were.

162. OF KING CANUTE AND EARL ULF.

When King Canute saw that the kings of Norway and Sweden steered eastward with their forces along the coast, he sent men to ride night and day on the land to follow their movements. Some spies went forward, others returned; so that King Canute had news every day of their progress. He had also spies always in their army. Now when he heard that a great part of the fleet had sailed away from the kings, he turned back with his forces to Seeland, and lay with his whole fleet in the Sound; so that a part lay

on the Scania side, and a part on the Seeland side. King Canute himself, the day before Michaelmas, rode with a great retinue to Roeskilde. There his brother-in-law, Earl Ulf, had prepared a great feast for him. The earl was the most agreeable host, but the king was silent and sullen. The earl talked to him in every way to make him cheerful, and brought forward everything which he thought would amuse him; but the king remained stern, and speaking little. At last the earl proposed to him a game at chess, which he agreed to; and a chess-board was produced, and they played together. Earl Ulf was hasty in temper, stiff, and in nothing yielding; but everything he managed went on well in his hands; and he was a great warrior, about whom there are many stories. He was the most powerful man in Denmark next to the king. Earl Ulf's sister Gyda was married to Earl Gudín (Godwin) Ulfnsdson; and their sons were Harald king of England, and Earl Toste, Earl Valthiof, Earl Morukare, and Earl Svein. Gyda was the name of their daughter, who was married to the English king Edward the Good.

163. OF THE EARL'S MURDER.

When they had played a while the king made a false move, at which the earl took a knight from the king; but the king set the piece again upon the board, and told the earl to make another move; but the earl grew angry, threw over the chess-board, stood up, and went away. The king said, "Runnest thou away, Ulf the coward?" The earl turned round at the door and said, "Thou wouldst have run farther at Helga river, if thou hadst come to battle there. Thou didst not call me Ulf the coward, when I hastened to thy help while the Swedes were beating thee like a dog." The earl then went out, and went to bed. A little later the king also went to bed. The following morning while the king was putting on his clothes he said to his footboy, "Go thou to Earl Ulf, and kill him."

The lad went, was away a while, and then came back.

The king said, "Hast thou killed the earl?"

"I did not kill him, for he was gone to Saint Lucius' church."

There was a man called Ivar White, a Norwegian by birth, who was the king's courtman and chamberlain. The king said to him, "Go thou and kill the earl."

Ivar went to the church, and in at the choir, and thrust his sword through the earl, who died on the spot. Then Ivar went to the king, with the bloody sword in his hand.

The king said, "Hast thou killed the earl?"

"I have killed him," says he.

"Thou didst well."

After the earl was killed the monks closed the church, and locked the doors. When that was told the king he sent a message to the monks, ordering them to open the church and sing high mass. They did as the king ordered; and when the king came to the church he bestowed on it great property, so that it had a large domain, by which that place was raised very high; and these lands have since always belonged to it. King Canute rode down to his ships, and lay there till late in harvest with a very large army.

164. OF KING OLAF AND THE SWEDES.

When King Olaf and King Onund heard that King Canute had sailed to the Sound, and lay there with a great force, the kings held a House-thing, and spoke much about what resolution they should adopt. King Olaf wished they should remain there with all the fleet, and see what King Canute would at last resolve to do. But the Swedes held it to be unadvisable to remain until the frost set in, and so it was determined; and King Onund went home with all his army, and King Olaf remained lying after them.

165. OF EGIL AND TOFE.

While King Olaf lay there, he had frequently conferences and consultations with his people. One night Egil Halsón and Tofe Valgaustson had the watch upon the king's ship. Tofe came from West Gautland, and was a man of high birth. While they sat on watch they heard much lamentation and crying among the people who had been taken in the war, and who lay bound on the shore at night. Tofe said it made him ill to hear such distress, and asked Egil to go with him, and let loose these people. This work they set

about, cut the cords, and let the people escape, and they looked upon it as a piece of great friendship; but the king was so enraged at it, that they themselves were in the greatest danger. When Egil afterwards fell sick the king for a long time would not visit him, until many people entreated it of him. It vexed Egil much to have done anything the king was angry at, and he begged his forgiveness. The king now dismissed his wrath against Egil, laid his hands upon the side on which Egil's pain was, and sang a prayer; upon which the pain ceased instantly, and Egil grew better. Tofe came, after entreaty, into reconciliation with the king, on condition that he should exhort his father Valgaut to come to the king. He was a heathen; but after conversation with the king he went over to Christianity, and died instantly when he was baptized.

166. TREACHERY TOWARDS KING OLAF.

King Olaf had now frequent conferences with his people, and asked advice from them, and from his chiefs, as to what he should determine upon. But there was no unanimity among them—some considering that unadvisable which others considered highly serviceable; and there was much indecision in their councils. King Canute had always spies in King Olaf's army, who entered into conversation with many of his men, offering them presents and favour on account of King Canute. Many allowed themselves to be seduced, and gave promises of fidelity, and to be King Canute's men, and bring the country into his hands if he came to Norway. This was apparent, afterwards, of many who at first kept it concealed. Some took at once money bribes, and others were promised money afterwards; and a great many there were who had got great presents of money from him before: for it may be said with truth of King Canute, that every man who came to him, and who he thought had the spirit of a man and would like his favour, got his hands full of gifts and money. On this account he was very popular, although his generosity was principally shown to foreigners, and was greatest the greater distance they came from.

167. KING OLAF'S CONSULTATIONS.

King Olaf had often conferences and meetings with his people, and asked their counsel; but as he observed they gave different opinions, he had a suspicion that there must be some who spoke differently from what they really thought advisable for him, and he was thus uncertain if all gave him due fidelity in council. Some pressed that with the first fair wind they should sail to the Sound, and so to Norway. They said the Danes would not dare to attack them, although they lay with so great a force right in the way. But the king was a man of too much understanding not to see that this was impracticable. He knew also that Olaf Trygvason had found it quite otherwise, as to the Danes not daring to fight, when he with a few people went into battle against a great body of them. The king also knew that in King Canute's army there were a great many Norwegians; therefore he entertained the suspicion that those who gave this advice were more favourable to King Canute than to him. King Olaf came at last to the determination, from all these considerations, that the people who would follow him should make themselves ready to proceed by land across Gautland, and so to Norway. "But our ships," said he, "and all things that we cannot take with us, I will send eastward to the Swedish king's dominions, and let them be taken care of for us there."

168. HAREK OF THJOTTA'S VOYAGE.

Harek of Thjotta replied thus to the king's speech: "It is evident that I cannot travel on foot to Norway. I am old and heavy, and little accustomed to walking. Besides, I am unwilling to part with my ship; for on that ship and its apparel I have bestowed so much labour, that it would go much against my inclination to put her into the hands of my enemies." The king said, "Come along with us, Harek, and we shall carry thee when thou art tired of walking." Then Harek sang these lines:—

I'll mount my ocean steed,
And o'er the sea I'll speed;
Forests and hills are not for me,—
I love the moving sea,

Though Canute block the Sound,
Rather than walk the ground,
And leave my ship, I'll see
What my ship will do for me.

Then King Olaf let everything be put in order for the journey. The people had their walking clothing and weapons, but their other clothes and effects they packed upon such horses as they could get. Then he sent off people to take his ships east to Calmar. There he had the vessels laid up, and the ships' apparel and other goods taken care of. Harek did as he had said, and waited for a wind, and then sailed west to Scania, until, about the decline of the day, he came with a fresh and fair wind to the eastward of Holar. There he let the sail and the vane, and flag and mast be taken down, and let the upper works of the ship be covered over with some grey tilt-canvas, and let a few men sit at the oars in the fore part and aft, but the most were sitting low down in the vessel.

When Canute's watchmen saw the ship, they talked with each other about what ship it might be, and made the guess that it must be one loaded with herrings or salt, as they only saw a few men at the oars; and the ship, besides, appeared to them grey, and wanting tar, as if burnt up by the sun, and they saw also that it was deeply loaded. Now when Harek came farther through the Sound, and past the fleet, he raised the mast, hoisted sail, and set up his gilded vane. The sail was white as snow, and in it were red and blue stripes of cloth interwoven. When the king's men saw the ship sailing in this state, they told the king that probably King Olaf had sailed through them. But King Canute replies, that King Olaf was too prudent a man to sail with a single ship through King Canute's fleet, and thought it more likely to be Harek of Thjotta, or the like of him. Many believed the truth to be that King Canute knew of this expedition of Harek, and that it would not have succeeded so if they had not concluded a friendship beforehand with each other; which seemed likely, after King Canute's and Harek's friendly understanding became generally known.

Harek made this song as he sailed northward round the isle of Vedrey:—

The widows of Lund may smile through their tears,
The Danish girls may have their jeers;
They may laugh or smile,
But outside their isle
Old Harek still on to his North land steers.

Harek went on his way, and never stopped till he came north to Halogaland, to his own house in Thjotta.

169. KING OLAF'S COURSE FROM SVITHJOD.

When King Olaf began his journey, he came first into Smaland, and then into West Gautland. He marched quietly and peaceably, and the country people gave him all assistance on his journey. Thus he proceeded until he came into Viken, and north through Viken to Sarpsborg, where he remained, and ordered a winter abode to be prepared (A.D. 1028). Then he gave most of the chiefs leave to return home, but kept the lendermen by him whom he thought the most serviceable. There were with him also all the sons of Arne Arnmodson, and they stood in great favour with the king. Geller Thorkelson, who the summer before had come from Iceland, also came there to the king, as before related.

170. OF SIGVAT THE SKALD.

Sigvat the skald had long been in King Olaf's household, as before related, and the king made him his marshal. Sigvat had no talent for speaking in prose; but in skaldcraft he was so practised, that the verses came as readily from his tongue as if he were speaking in usual language. He had made a mercantile journey to Normandy, and in the course of it had come to England, where he met King Canute, and obtained permission from him to sail to Norway, as before related. When he came to Norway he proceeded straight to King Olaf, and found him at Sarpsborg. He presented himself before the king just as he was sitting down to table. Sigvat saluted him. The king looked at Sigvat and was silent. Then Sigvat sang:—

Great king! thy marshal is come home,
No more by land or sea to roam,

But by thy side
Still to abide.
Great king! what seat here shall he take
For the king's honour—not his sake?
For all seats here
To me are dear.

Then was verified the old saying, that "many are the ears of a king;" for King Olaf had heard all about Sigvat's journey, and that he had spoken with Canute. He says to Sigvat, "I do not know if thou art my marshal, or hast become one of Canute's men." Sigvat said:—

Canute, whose golden gifts display
A generous heart, would have me stay,
Service in his great court to take,
And my own Norway king forsake.
Two masters at a time, I said,
Were one too many for men bred
Where truth and virtue, shown to all,
Make all men true in Olaf's hall.

Then King Olaf told Sigvat to take his seat where he before used to sit; and in a short time Sigvat was in as high favour with the king as ever.

171. OF ERLING SKJALGSON AND HIS SONS.

Erling Skjalgson and all his sons had been all summer in King Canute's army, in the retinue of Earl Hakon. Thoror Hund was also there, and was in high esteem. Now when King Canute heard that King Olaf had gone overland to Norway, he discharged his army, and gave all men leave to go to their winter abodes. There was then in Denmark a great army of foreigners, both English, Norwegians, and men of other countries, who had joined the expedition in summer. In autumn (A.D. 1027) Erling Skjalgson went to Norway with his men, and received great presents from King Canute at parting; but Thoror Hund remained behind in King Canute's court. With Erling went messengers from King Canute well provided with money; and in winter they travelled through all the country, paying the money which King Canute had promised to many in autumn for their assistance. They gave presents in money, besides, to many whose friendship could be purchased for King Canute. They received much assistance in their travels from Erling. In this way it came to pass that many turned their support to King Canute, promised him their services, and agreed to oppose King Olaf. Some did this openly, but many more concealed it from the public. King Olaf heard this news, for many had something to tell him about it; and the conversation in the court often turned upon it. Sigvat the skald made a song upon it:—

The base traitors ply
With purses of gold,
Wanting to buy
What is not to be sold,—
The king's life and throne
Wanting to buy:
But our souls are our own,
And to hell we'll not hie.
No pleasure in heaven,
As we know full well,
To the traitor is given,—
His soul is his hell.

Often also the conversation turned upon how ill it beseeemed Earl Hakon to raise his hand in arms against King Olaf, who had given him his life when he fell into the king's power; but Sigvat was a particular friend of Earl Hakon, and when he heard the earl spoken against he sang:—

Our own court people we may blame,
If they take gold to their own shame,
Their king and country to betray,
With those who give it's not the same,
From them we have no faith to claim:
'Tis we are wrong, if we give way.

172. OF KING OLAF'S PRESENTS AT YULE.

King Olaf gave a great feast at Yule, and many great people had come to him. It was the seventh day of Yule, that the king, with a few persons, among whom was Sigvat, who attended him day and

night, went to a house in which the king's most precious valuables were kept. He had, according to his custom, collected there with great care the valuable presents he was to make on New Year's eve. There was in the house no small number of gold-mounted swords; and Sigvat sang:—

The swords stand there,
All bright and fair,—
Those oars that dip in blood:
If I in favour stood,
I too might have a share.
A sword the skald would gladly take,
And use it for his master's sake:
In favour once he stood,
And a sword has stained in blood.

The king took a sword of which the handle was twisted round with gold, and the guard was gold-mounted, and gave it to him. It was a valuable article; but the gift was not seen without envy, as will appear hereafter.

Immediately after Yule the king began his journey to the Uplands; for he had a great many people about him, but had received no income that autumn from the North country, for there had been an armament in summer, and the king had laid out all the revenues he could command; and also he had no vessels with which he and his people could go to the North. At the same time he had news from the North, from which he could see that there would be no safety for him in that quarter, unless he went with a great force. For these reasons he determined to proceed through the Uplands, although it was not so long a time since he had been there in guest-quarters as the law prescribes, and as the kings usually had the custom of observing in their visits. When he came to the Uplands the lendersmen and the richest bondes invited him to be their guest, and thus lightened his expenses.

173. OF BJORN THE BAILIFF.

There was a man called Bjorn who was of Gautland family, and a friend and acquaintance of Queen Astrid, and in some way related to her. She had given him farm-management and other offices in the upper part of Hedemark. He had also the management of Osterdal district. Bjorn was not in esteem with the king, nor liked by the bondes. It happened in a hamlet which Bjorn ruled over, that many swine and cattle were missing; therefore Bjorn ordered a Thing to be called to examine the matter. Such pillage he attributed chiefly to the people settled in forest-farms far from other men; by which he referred particularly to those who dwelt in Osterdal, for that district was very thinly inhabited, and full of lakes and forest-cleanings, and but in few places was any great neighbourhood together.

174. OF RAUD'S SONS.

There was a man called Raud who dwelt in Osterdal. His wife was called Ragnhild; and his sons, Dag and Sigurd, were men of great talent. They were present at the Thing, made a reply in defence of the Osterdal people, and removed the accusation from them. Bjorn thought they were too pert in their answer, and too fine in their clothes and weapons; and therefore turned his speech against these brothers, and said it was not unlikely they may have committed these thefts. They denied it, and the Thing closed. Soon after King Olaf, with his retinue, came to guest-quarters in the house of bailiff Bjorn. The matter which had been before the Thing was then complained of to the king; and Bjorn said that Raud's sons appeared to him to have committed these thefts. A messenger was sent for Raud's sons; and when they appeared before the king he said they had not at all the appearance of thieves, and acquitted them. Thereupon they invited the king, with all his retinue, to a three days' entertainment at their father's; and although Bjorn dissuaded him from it, the king went. At Raud's there was a very excellent feast. The king asked Raud what people he and his wife were. Raud answered that he was originally a Swedish man, rich and of high birth; "but I ran away with the wife I have ever since had, and she is a sister of King Hring Dagson." The king then remembered both their families. He found that father and sons were men of understanding, and asked them what they could do. Sigurd said he could interpret dreams, and determine the time of the day although no heavenly bodies could be seen.

The king made trial of his art, and found it was as Sigurd had said. Dag stated, as his accomplishment, that he could see the misdeeds and vices of every man who came under his eye, when he chose to observe him closely. The king told him to declare what faults of disposition he saw in the king himself. Dag mentioned a fault which the king was sensible he really had. Then the king asked what fault the bailiff Bjorn had. Dag said Bjorn was a thief; and told also where Bjorn had concealed on his farm the bones, horns, and hides of the cattle he had stolen in autumn; "for he committed," said Dag, "all the thefts in autumn which he accuses other people of." Dag also told the king the places where the king should go after leaving them. When the king departed from Raud's house he was accompanied on the way, and presented with friendly gifts; and Raud's sons remained with the king. The king went first to Bjorn's, and found there that all Dag had told him was true. Upon which he drove Bjorn out of the country; and he had to thank the queen that he preserved life and limbs.

175. THORER'S DEATH.

Thorer, a son of Olver of Eggja, a stepson of Kalf Arnason, and a sister's son of Thorer Hund, was a remarkably handsome man, stout and strong. He was at this time eighteen years old; had made a good marriage in Hedemark, by which he got great wealth; and was besides one of the most popular of men, and formed to be a chief. He invited the king and his retinue home to him to a feast. The king accepted the invitation, went to Thorer's, and was well received. The entertainment was very splendid; they were excellently treated, and all that was set before the guests was of the best that could be got. The king and his people talked among themselves of the excellence of everything, and knew not what they should admire the most,—whether Thorer's house outside, or the inside furniture, the table service, or the liquors, or the host who gave them such a feast. But Dag said little about it. The king used often to speak to Dag, and ask him about various things; and he had proved the truth of all that Dag had said, both of things that had happened or were to happen, and therefore the king had much confidence in what he said. The king called Dag to him to have a private conversation together, and spoke to him about many things. Afterwards the king turned the conversation on Thorer,—what an excellent man Thorer was, and what a superb feast he had made for them. Dag answered but little to this, but agreed it was true what the king said. The king then asked Dag what disposition or faith he found in Thorer. Dag replied that he must certainly consider Thorer of a good disposition, if he be really what most people believe him to be. The king told him to answer direct what he was asked, and said that it was his duty to do so. Dag replies, "Then thou must allow me to determine the punishment if I disclose his faith." The king replied that he would not submit his decision to another man, but again ordered Dag to reply to what he asked.

Dag replies, "The sovereign's order goes before all. I find this disposition in Thorer, as in so many others, that he is too greedy of money."

The king: "Is he then a thief, or a robber?"

"He is neither."

"What is he then?"

"To win money he is a traitor to his sovereign. He has taken money from King Canute the Great for thy head."

The king asks, "What proof hast thou of the truth of this?"

Dag: "He has upon his right arm, above the elbow, a thick gold ring, which King Canute gave him, and which he lets no man see."

This ended their conference, and the king was very wroth. Now as the king sat at table, and the guests had drunk a while with great mirth, and Thorer went round to see the guests well served, the king ordered Thorer to be called to him. He went up before the table, and laid his hands upon it.

The king asked, "How old a man art thou, Thorer?"

He answered, "I am eighteen years old."

"A stout man thou art for those years, and thou hast been fortunate also."

Then the king took his right hand, and felt it towards the elbow.

Thorer said, "Take care, for I have a boil upon my arm."

The king held his hand there, and felt there was something hard under it. "Hast thou not heard," said he, "that I am a physician? Let me see the boil."

As Thorer saw it was of no use to conceal it longer, he took off the ring and laid it on the table.

The king asked if that was the gift of King Canute.

Thorer replied that he could not deny it was.

The king ordered him to be seized and laid in irons. Kalf came up and entreated for mercy, and offered money for him, which also was seconded by many; but the king was so wroth that nobody could get in a word. He said Thorer should suffer the doom he had prepared for himself. Thereupon he ordered Thorer to be killed. This deed was much detested in the Uplands, and not less in the Thronthjem country, where many of Thorer's connections were. Kalf took the death of this man much to heart, for he had been his foster-son in childhood.

176. THE FALL OF GRJOTGARD.

Grjotgard Olverson, Thorer's brother, and the eldest of the brothers, was a very wealthy man, and had a great troop of people about him. He lived also at this time in Hedemark. When he heard that Thorer had been killed, he made an attack upon the places where the king's goods and men were; but, between whiles, he kept himself in the forest and other secret places. When the king heard of this disturbance, he had inquiry made about Grjotgard's haunts, and found out that he had taken up night-quarters not far from where the king was. King Olaf set out in the night-time, came there about day-dawn, and placed a circle of men round the house in which Grjotgard was sleeping. Grjotgard and his men, roused by the stir of people and clash of arms, ran to their weapons, and Grjotgard himself sprang to the front room. He asked who commanded the troop; and it was answered him, "King Olaf was come there." Grjotgard asked if the king would hear his words. The king, who stood at the door, said that Grjotgard might speak what he pleased, and he would hear his words. Grjotgard said, "I do not beg for mercy;" and at the same moment he rushed out, having his shield over his head, and his drawn sword in his hand. It was not so much light that he could see clearly. He struck his sword at the king; but Arnbjorn ran in, and the thrust pierced him under his armour into his stomach, and Arnbjorn got his deathwound. Grjotgard was killed immediately, and most of his people with him. After this event the king turned back to the south to Viken.

177. KING OLAF SENDS FOR HIS SHIPS AND GOODS.

Now when the king came to Tunsberg he sent men out to all the districts, and ordered the people out upon a levy. He had but a small provision of shipping, and there were only bondes' vessels to be got. From the districts in the near neighbourhood many people came to him, but few from any distance; and it was soon found that the people had turned away from the king. King Olaf sent people to Gautland for his ships, and other goods and wares which had been left there in autumn; but the progress of these men was very slow, for it was no better now than in autumn to sail through the Sound, as King Canute had in spring fitted out an army throughout the whole of the Danish dominions, and had no fewer than 1200 vessels.

178. KING OLAF'S COUNSELS.

The news came to Norway that King Canute had assembled an immense armament through all Denmark, with which he intended to conquer Norway. When this became known the people were less willing to join King Olaf, and he got but little aid from the bondes. The king's men often spoke about this among themselves. Sigvat tells of it thus:—

Our men are few, our ships are small,
While England's king is strong in all;
But yet our king is not afraid—
O! never be such king betrayed!
'Tis evil counsel to deprive
Our king of countrymen to strive
To save their country, sword in hand:
'Tis money that betrays our land.

The king held meetings with the men of the court, and sometimes House-things with all his people, and consulted with them what they should, in their opinion, undertake. "We must not conceal from ourselves," said he, "that Canute will come here this summer; and that he has, as ye all know, a large force, and we have at present but few men to oppose to him; and, as matters now stand, we cannot depend much on the fidelity of the country people." The king's men replied to his speech in various ways; but it is said that Sigvat the skald replied thus, advising flight, as treachery, not cowardice, was the cause of it:—

We may well fly, when even our foe
Offers us money if we go.
I may be blamed, accused of fear;
But treachery, not faith, rules here.
Men may retire who long have shown
Their faith and love, and now alone
Retire because they cannot save—
This is no treachery in the brave.

179. HAREK OF THJOTTA BURNS GRANKEL AND HIS MEN.

The same spring (A.D. 1028) it happened in Halogaland that Harek of Thjotta remembered how Asmund Grankelson had plundered and beaten his house-servants. A cutter with twenty rowing-benches, which belonged to Harek, was afloat in front of the house, with tent and deck, and he spread the report that he intended to go south to Thronhjelm. One evening Harek went on board with his house-servants, about eighty men, who rowed the whole night; and he came towards morning to Grankel's house, and surrounded it with his men. They then made an attack on the house, and set fire to it; and Grankel with his people were burnt, and some were killed outside; and in all about thirty men lost their lives. After this deed Harek returned home, and sat quietly in his farm. Asmund was with King Olaf when he heard of it; therefore there was nobody in Halogaland to sue Harek for mulct for this deed, nor did he offer any satisfaction.

180. KING CANUTE'S EXPEDITION TO NORWAY.

Canute the Great collected his forces, and went to Limfjord. When he was ready with his equipment he sailed from thence with his whole fleet to Norway; made all possible speed, and did not land to the eastward of the Fjords, but crossed Folden, and landed in Agder, where he summoned a Thing. The bondes came down from the upper country to hold a Thing with Canute, who was everywhere in that country accepted as king. Then he placed men over the districts, and took hostages from the bondes, and no man opposed him. King Olaf was in Tunsberg when Canute's fleet sailed across the mouth of the fjord. Canute sailed northwards along the coast, and people came to him from all the districts, and promised him fealty. He lay a while in Egersund, where Erling Skjalgson came to him with many people, and King Canute and Erling renewed their league of friendship. Among other things, Canute promised Erling the whole country between Stad and Rygiarbit to rule over. Then King Canute proceeded; and, to be short in our tale, did not stop until he came to Thronhjelm, and landed at Nidaros. In Thronhjelm he called together a Thing for the eight districts, at which King Canute was chosen king of all Norway. Thorur Hund, who had come with King Canute from Denmark, was there, and also Harek of Thjotta; and both were made sheriffs of the king, and took the oath of fealty to him. King Canute gave them great fiefs, and also right to the Lapland trade, and presented them besides with great gifts. He enriched all men who were inclined to enter into friendly accord with him both with fiefs and money, and gave them greater power than they had before.

181. OF KING CANUTE.

When King Canute had laid the whole of Norway trader his authority, he called together a numerous Thing, both of his own people and of the people of the country; and at it he made proclamation, that he made his relation Earl Hakon the governor-in-chief of all the land in Norway that he had conquered in this expedition. In like manner he led his son Hardaknut to the high-seat at his side,

gave him the title of king, and therewith the whole Danish dominion. King Canute took as hostages from all lendemen and great bondes in Norway either their sons, brothers, or other near connections, or the men who were dearest to them and appeared to him most suitable; by which he, as before observed, secured their fidelity to him. As soon as Earl Hakon had attained this power in Norway his brother-in-law, Einar Tambaskelfer, made an agreement with him, and received back all the fiefs he formerly had possessed while the earls ruled the country. King Canute gave Einar great gifts, and bound him by great kindness to his interests; and promised that Einar should be the greatest and most important man in Norway, among those who did not hold the highest dignity, as long as he had power over the country. He added to this, that Einar appeared to him the most suitable man to hold the highest title of honour in Norway if no earls remained, and his son Eindride also, on account of his high birth. Einar placed a great value on these promises, and, in return, promised the greatest fidelity. Einar's chiefship began anew with this.

182. OF THORARIN LOFTUNGA.

There was a man by name Thorarin Loftunga, an Icelander by birth, and a great skald, who had been much with the kings and other great chiefs. He was now with King Canute the Great, and had composed a flock, or short poem, in his praise. When the king heard of this he was very angry, and ordered him to bring the next day a drapa, or long poem, by the time he went to table; and if he failed to do so, said the king, "he shall be hanged for his impudence in composing such a small poem about King Canute." Thorarin then composed a stave as a refrain, which he inserted in the poem, and also augmented it with several other strophes or verses. This was the refrain:—

Canute protects his realm, as Jove,
Guardian of Greece, his realm above.

King Canute rewarded him for the poem with fifty marks of silver. The poem was called the "Headransom" ("Hofudlausn"). Thorarin composed another poem about King Canute, which was called the "Campaign Poem" ("Togdrapa"); and therein he tells King Canute's expedition when he sailed from Denmark to Norway; and the following are strophes from one of the parts of this poem:—

Canute with all his men is out,
Under the heavens in war-ships stout,—
'Out on the sea, from Limfjord's green,
My good, my brave friend's fleet is seen.
The men of Agder on the coast
Tremble to see this mighty host:
The guilty tremble as they spy
The victor's fleet beneath the sky.
"The sight surpasses far the tale,
As glacing in the sun they sail;
The king's ship glittering all with gold,
And splendour there not to be told.
Round Lister many a coal-black mast
Of Canute's fleet is gliding past.
And now through Eger sound they ride,
Upon the gently heaving tide.
"And all the sound is covered o'er
With ships and sails, from shore to shore,
A mighty king, a mighty host,
Hiding the sea on Eger coast.
And peaceful men in haste now hie
Up Hiornagla-hill the fleet to spy.
As round the ness where Stad now lies
Each high-stemmed ship in splendour flies.
"Nor seemed the voyage long, I trow,
To warrior on the high-built bow,
As o'er the ocean-mountains riding
The land and hill seem past him gliding.
With whistling breeze and flashing spray
Past Stein the gay ships dashed away;
In open sea, the southern gale
Filled every wide out-bellying sail.
"Still on they fly, still northward go,
Till he who conquers every foe,
The mighty Canute, came to land,
Far in the north on Thronhjelm's strand.
There this great king of Jutland race,
Whose deeds and gifts surpass in grace
All other kings, bestowed the throne
Of Norway on his sister's son.
"To his own son he gave the crown

(This I must add to his renown)
Of Denmark—land of shadowy vales,
In which the white swan trims her sails.

Here it is told that King Canute's expedition was grander than saga can tell; but Thorarin sang thus because he would pride himself upon being one of King Canute's retinue when he came to Norway.

183. OF THE MESSENGERS SENT BY KING OLAF FOR HIS SHIPS.

The men whom King Olaf had sent eastwards to Gautland after his ships took with them the vessels they thought the best, and burnt the rest. The ship-apparel and other goods belonging to the king and his men they also took with them; and when they heard that King Canute had gone to Norway they sailed west through the Sound, and then north to Viken to King Olaf, to whom they delivered his ships. He was then at Tunsberg. When King Olaf learnt that King Canute was sailing north along the coast, King Olaf steered with his fleet into Oslo fjord, and into a branch of it called Drafn, where he lay quiet until King Canute's fleet had sailed southwards again. On this expedition which King Canute made from the North along the coast, he held a Thing in each district, and in every Thing the country was bound by oath in fealty to him, and hostages were given him. He went eastward across the mouths of the fjords to Sarpsborg, and held a Thing there, and, as elsewhere, the country was surrendered to him under oath of fidelity. King Canute then returned south to Denmark, after having conquered Norway without stroke of sword, and he ruled now over three kingdoms. So says Halvard Hareksblese when he sang of King Canute:—

The warrior-king, whose blood-stain'd shield
Has shone on many a hard-fought field,
England and Denmark now has won,
And o'er three kingdoms rules alone.
Peace now he gives us fast and sure,
Since Norway too is made secure
By him who oft, in days of yore,
Glutted the hawk and wolf with gore.

184. OF KING OLAF IN HIS PROCEEDINGS.

King Olaf sailed with his ships out to Tunsberg, as soon as he heard that King Canute had turned back, and was gone south to Denmark. He then made himself ready with the men who liked to follow him, and had then thirteen ships. Afterwards he sailed out along Viken; but got little money, and few men, as those only followed him who dwelt in islands, or on outlying points of land. The king landed in such places, but got only the money and men that fell in his way; and he soon perceived that the country had abandoned him. He proceeded on according to the winds. This was in the beginning of winter (A.D. 1029). The wind turned very late in the season in their favour, so that they lay long in the Seley islands, where they heard the news from the North, through merchants, who told the king that Erling Skjalgson had collected a great force in Jadar, and that his ship lay fully rigged outside of the land, together with many other vessels belonging to the bondes; namely, skiffs, fisher-yachts, and great row-boats. Then the king sailed with his fleet from the East, and lay a while in Egersund. Both parties heard of each other now, and Erling assembled all the men he could.

185. OF KING OLAF'S VOYAGE.

On Thomasmas, before Yule (Dec. 21), the king left the harbour as soon as day appeared. With a good but rather strong gale he sailed northwards past Jadar. The weather was rainy, with dark flying clouds in the sky. The spies went immediately in through the Jadar country when the king sailed past it; and as soon as Erling heard that the king was sailing past from the East, he let the war-horn call all the people on board, and the whole force hastened to the ships, and prepared for battle. The king's ship passed by Jadar at a great rate; but thereafter turned in towards the land, intending to run up the fjords to gather men and money. Erling Skjalgson perceived this, and sailed after him with a great force and many ships. Swiftly their vessels flew, for they had nothing

on board but men and arms: but Erling's ship went much faster than the others; therefore he took in a reef in the sails, and waited for the other vessels. Then the king saw that Erling with his fleet gained upon him fast; for the king's ships were heavily laden, and were besides water-soaked, having been in the sea the whole summer, autumn, and winter, up to this time. He saw also that there would be a great want of men, if he should go against the whole of Erling's fleet when it was assembled. He hailed from ship to ship the orders to let the sails gently sink, and to unship the booms and outriggers, which was done. When Erling saw this he calls out to his people, and orders them to get on more sail. "Ye see," says he, "that their sails are diminishing, and they are getting fast away from our sight." He took the reef out of the sails of his ship, and outsailed all the others immediately; for Erling was very eager in his pursuit of King Olaf.

186. OF ERLING SKJALGSON'S FALL.

King Olaf then steered in towards the Bokn fjord, by which the ships came out of sight of each other. Thereafter the king ordered his men to strike the sails, and row forwards through a narrow sound that was there, and all the ships lay collected within a rocky point. Then all the king's men put on their weapons. Erling sailed in through the sound, and observed nothing until the whole fleet was before him, and he saw the king's men rowing towards him with all their ships at once. Erling and his crew let fall the sails, and seized their weapons; but the king's fleet surrounded his ship on all sides. Then the fight began, and it was of the sharpest; but soon the greatest loss was among Erling's men. Erling stood on the quarter-deck of his ship. He had a helmet on his head, a shield before him, and a sword in his hand. Sigvat the skald had remained behind in Viken, and heard the tidings. He was a great friend of Erling, had received presents from him, and had been at his house. Sigvat composed a poem upon Erling's fall, in which there is the following verse:—

Erling has set his ship on sea—
Against the king away is he:
He who oft lets the eagle stain
Her yellow feet in blood of slain.
His little war-ship side by side
With the king's fleet, the fray will bide.
Now sword to sword the fight is raging,
Which Erling with the king is waging.

Then Erling's men began to fall, and at the same moment his ship was carried by boarding, and every man of his died in his place. The king himself was amongst the foremost in the fray. So says Sigvat:—

The king's men hewed with hasty sword,—
The king urged on the ship to board,—
All o'er the decks the wounded lay:
Right fierce and bloody was that fray.
In Tungur sound, on Jadar shore,
The decks were slippery with red gore;
Warm blood was dropping in the sound,
Where the king's sword was gleaming round.

So entirely had Erling's men fallen, that not a man remained standing in his ship but himself alone; for there was none who asked for quarter, or none who got it if he did ask. There was no opening for flight, for there lay ships all around Erling's ship on every side, and it is told for certain that no man attempted to fly; and Sigvat says:—

All Erling's men fell in the fray,
Off Bokn fjord, this hard-fought day.
The brave king boarded, onward cheered,
And north of Tungur the deck was cleared.
Erling alone, the brave, the stout,
Cut off from all, yet still held out;
High on the stern—a sight to see—
In his lone ship alone stood he.

Then Erling was attacked both from the fore-castle and from the other ships. There was a large space upon the poop which stood high above the other ships, and which nobody could reach but by arrow-shot, or partly with the thrust of spear, but which he always struck from him by parrying. Erling defended himself so manfully, that no example is known of one man having sustained the attack of so many men so long. Yet he never tried to get away, nor asked for quarter. So says Sigvat:—

Skjalg's brave son no mercy craves,—
 The battle's fury still he braves;
 The spear-storm, through the air sharp singing,
 Against his shield was ever ringing.
 So Erling stood; but fate had willed
 His life off Bokn should be spilled.
 No braver man has, since his day,
 Past Bokn fjord ta'en his way.

When Olaf went back a little upon the fore-deck he saw Erling's behaviour; and the king accosted him thus:—"Thou hast turned against me to-day, Erling."

He replies, "The eagle turns his claws in defence when torn asunder." Sigvat the skald tells thus of these words of Erling:—

Erling, our best defence of old,—
 Erling the brave, the brisk, the bold,—
 Stood to his arms, gaily crying,
 'Eagles should show their claws, though dying.'
 The very words which once before
 To Olaf he had said on shore,
 At Utstein when they both prepared
 To meet the foe, and danger shared.

Then said the king, "Wilt thou enter into my service, Erling?"
 "That I will," said he; took the helmet off his head, laid down his sword and shield, and went forward to the fore-castle deck.

The king struck him in the chin with the sharp point of his battle-axe, and said, "I shall mark thee as a traitor to thy sovereign."

Then Aslak Fitiaskalle rose up, and struck Erling in the head with an axe, so that it stood fast in his brain, and was instantly his death-wound. Thus Erling lost his life.

The king said to Aslak, "May all ill luck attend thee for that stroke; for thou hast struck Norway out of my hands."

Aslak replied, "It is bad enough if that stroke displease thee, for I thought it was striking Norway into thy hands; and if I have given thee offence, sire, by this stroke, and have thy ill-will for it, it will go badly with me, for I will get so many men's ill-will and enmity for this deed that I would need all your protection and favour."

The king replied that he should have it.

Thereafter the king ordered every man to return to his ship, and to get ready to depart as fast as he could. "We will not plunder the slain," says he, "and each man may keep what he has taken." The men returned to the ships and prepared themselves for the departure as quickly as possible; and scarcely was this done before the vessels of the bondes ran in from the south into the sound. It went with the bonde-army as is often seen, that the men, although many in numbers, know not what to do when they have experienced a check, have lost their chief, and are without leaders. None of Erling's sons were there, and the bondes therefore made no attack, and the king sailed on his way northwards. But the bondes took Erling's corpse, adorned it, and carried it with them home to Sole, and also the bodies of all who had fallen. There was great lamentation over Erling; and it has been a common observation among people, that Erling Skjalgson was the greatest and worthiest man in Norway of those who had no high title. Sigvat made these verses upon the occasion:—

Thus Erling fell—and such a gain
 To buy with such a loss was vain;
 For better man than he ne'er died,
 And the king's gain was small beside.
 In truth no man I ever knew
 Was, in all ways, so firm and true;
 Free from servility and pride,
 Honoured by all, yet thus he died.

Sigvat also says that Aslak had very unthinkingly committed this murder of his own kinsman:—

Norway's brave defender's dead!
 Aslak has heaped on his own head
 The guilt of murdering his own kin:
 May few be guilty of such sin!
 His kinsman's murder on him lies—
 Our forefathers, in sayings wise,
 Have said, what is unknown to few,
 'Kinsmen to kinsmen should be true.'

187. OF THE INSURRECTION OF AGDER DISTRICT.

Of Erling's sons some at that time were north in Throndhjem, some in Hordaland, and some in the Fjord district, for the purpose of collecting men. When Erling's death was reported, the news came also that there was a levy raising in Agder, Hordaland, and Rogaland. Forces were raised and a great army assembled, under Erling's sons, to pursue King Olaf.

When King Olaf retired from the battle with Erling he went northward through the sounds, and it was late in the day. It is related that the king then made the following verses:—

This night, with battle sounds wild ringing,
 Small joy to the fair youth is bringing
 Who sits in Jadar, little dreaming
 O'er what this night the raven's screaming
 The far-descended Erling's life
 Too soon has fallen; but, in the strife
 He met the luck they well deserve
 Who from their faith and fealty swerve.

Afterwards the king sailed with his fleet along the land northwards, and got certain tidings of the bondes assembling an army. There were many chiefs and lendemen at this time with King Olaf, and all the sons of Arne. Of this Bjarne Gullbrarskald speaks in the poem he composed about Kalf Arnason:—

Kalf! thou hast fought at Bokn well;
 Of thy brave doings all men tell:
 When Harald's son his men urged on
 To the hard strife, thy courage shone.
 Thou soon hadst made a good Yule feast
 For greedy wolf there in the East:
 Where stone and spear were flying round,
 There thou wast still the foremost found.
 The people suffered in the strife
 When noble Erling lost his life,
 And north of Utstein many a speck
 Of blood lay black upon the deck.
 The king, 'tis clear, has been deceived,
 By treason of his land bereaved;
 And Agder now, whose force is great,
 Will rule o'er all parts of the state.

King Olaf continued his voyage until he came north of Stad, and brought up at the Herey Isles. Here he heard the news that Earl Hakon had a great war-force in Throndhjem, and thereupon the king held a council with his people. Kalf Arnason urged much to advance to Throndhjem, and fight Earl Hakon, notwithstanding the difference of numbers. Many others supported this advice, but others dissuaded from it, and the matter was left to the king's judgment.

188. DEATH OF ASLAK FITIASKALLE.

Afterwards the king went into Steinavag, and remained there all night; but Aslak Fitiaskalle ran into Borgund, where he remained the night, and where Vigleik Arnason was before him. In the morning, when Aslak was about returning on board, Vigleik assaulted him, and sought to avenge Erling's murder. Aslak fell there. Some of the king's court-men, who had been home all summer, joined the king here. They came from Frekeysund, and brought the king tidings that Earl Hakon, and many lendemen with him, had come in the morning to Frekeysund with a large force; "and they will end thy days, sire, if they have strength enough." Now the king sent his men up to a hill that was near; and when they came to the top, and looked northwards to Bjarney Island, they perceived that a great armament of many ships was coming from the north, and they hastened back to the king with this intelligence. The king, who was lying there with only twelve ships, ordered the war-horn to sound, the tents to be taken down on his ships, and they took to their oars. When they were quite ready, and were leaving the harbour, the bonde army sailed north around Thiotande with twenty-five ships. The king then steered inside of Nyrfe Island, and inside of Hundsvær. Now when King Olaf came right abreast of Borgund, the ship which Aslak had steered came out to meet him, and when they found the king they told him the tidings,—that Vigleik Arnason had killed Aslak Fitiaskalle, because he had killed Erling Skjalgson. The king took this news very angrily, but could not delay his voyage on account

of the enemy and he sailed in by Vegsund and Skor. There some of his people left him; among others, Kalf Arnason, with many other lendermen and ship commanders, who all went to meet Earl Hakon. King Olaf, however, proceeded on his way without stopping until he came to Todar fjord, where he brought up at Valdal, and landed from his ship. He had then five ships with him, which he drew up upon the shore, and took care of their sails and materials. Then he set up his land-tent upon a point of land called Sult, where there are pretty flat fields, and set up a cross near to the point of land. A bonde, by name Bruse, who dwelt there in More, and was chief over the valley, came down to King Olaf, together with many other bondes, and received him well, and according to his dignity; and he was friendly, and pleased with their reception of him. Then the king asked if there was a passable road up in the country from the valley to Lesjar; and Bruse replied, that there was an urd in the valley called Skerfsurd not passable for man or beast. King Olaf answers, "That we must try, bonde, and it will go as God pleases. Come here in the morning with your yoke, and come yourself with it, and let us then see. When we come to the sloping precipice, what chance there may be, and if we cannot devise some means of coming over it with horses and people."

189. CLEARING OF THE URD.

Now when day broke the bondes drove down with their yokes, as the king had told them. The clothes and weapons were packed upon horses, but the king and all the people went on foot. He went thus until he came to a place called Krosbrekka, and when he came up upon the hill he rested himself, sat down there a while, looked down over the fjord, and said, "A difficult expedition ye have thrown upon my hands, ye lendermen, who have now changed your fealty, although but a little while ago ye were my friends and faithful to me." There are now two crosses erected upon the bank on which the king sat. Then the king mounted a horse, and rode without stopping up the valley, until he came to the precipice. Then the king asked Bruse if there was no summer hut of cattle-herds in the neighbourhood, where they could remain. He said there was. The king ordered his land-tent to be set up, and remained there all night. In the morning the king ordered them to drive to the urd, and try if they could get across it with the waggons. They drove there, and the king remained in the meantime in his tent. Towards evening the king's court-men and the bondes came back, and told how they had had a very fatiguing labour, without making any progress, and that there never could be a road made that they could get across: so they continued there the second night, during which, for the whole night, the king was occupied in prayer. As soon as he observed day dawning he ordered his men to drive again to the urd, and try once more if they could get across it with the waggons; but they went very unwillingly, saying nothing could be gained by it. When they were gone the man who had charge of the king's kitchen came, and said there were only two carcasses of young cattle remaining of provision: "Although you, sire, have 400 men, and there are 100 bondes besides." Then the king ordered that he should set all the kettles on the fire, and put a little bit of meat in each kettle, which was done. Then the king went there, and made the sign of the cross over each kettle, and told them to make ready the meat. The king then went to the urd called Skerfsurd, where a road should be cleared. When the king came all his people were sitting down, quite worn out with the hard labour. Bruse said, "I told you, sire, but you would not believe me, that we could make nothing of this urd." The king laid aside his cloak, and told them to go to work once more at the urd. They did so, and now twenty men could handle stones which before 100 men could not move from the place; and thus before midday the road was cleared so well that it was as passable for men, and for horses with packs, as a road in the plain fields. The king, after this, went down again to where the meat was, which place is called Olaf's Rock. Near the rock is a spring, at which Olaf washed himself; and therefore at the present day, when the cattle in the valley are sick, their illness is made better by their drinking at this well. Thereafter the king sat down to table with all the others; and when he was satisfied he asked if there was any other sheeling on the other side

of the urd, and near the mountains, where they could pass the night. Bruse said there was such a sheeling, called Groningar; but that nobody could pass the night there on account of witchcraft, and evil beings who were in the sheeling. Then the king said they must get ready for their journey, as he wanted to be at the sheeling for the night. Then came the kitchen-master to the king, and tells that there was come an extraordinary supply of provisions, and he did not know where it had come from, or how. The king thanked God for this blessing, and gave the bondes who drove down again to their valley some rations of food, but remained himself all night in the sheeling. In the middle of the night, while the people were asleep, there was heard in the cattle-fold a dreadful cry, and these words: "Now Olaf's prayers are burning me," says the spirit, "so that I can no longer be in my habitation; now must I fly, and never more come to this fold." When the king's people awoke in the morning the king proceeded to the mountains, and said to Bruse, "Here shall now a farm be settled, and the bonde who dwells here shall never want what is needful for the support of life; and never shall his crop be destroyed by frost, although the crops be frozen on the farms both above it and below it." Then the king proceeded over the mountains, and came to a farm called Einby, where he remained for the night. King Olaf had then been fifteen years king of Norway (A.D. 1015-1029), including the year both he and Svein were in the country, and this year we have now been telling about. It was, namely, a little past Yule when the king left his ships and took to the land, as before related. Of this portion of his reign the priest Are Thorgilson the Wise was the first who wrote; and he was both faithful in his story, of a good memory, and so old a man that he could remember the men, and had heard their accounts, who were so old that through their age they could remember these circumstances as he himself wrote them in his books, and he named the men from whom he received his information. Otherwise it is generally said that King Olaf had been fifteen years king of Norway when he fell; but they who say so reckon to Earl Svein's government, the last year he was in the country, for King Olaf lived fifteen years afterwards as king.

190. OLAF'S PROPHECIES.

When the king had been one night at Lesjar he proceeded on his journey with his men, day by day; first into Gudbrandsdal, and from thence out to Redemark. Now it was seen who had been his friends, for they followed him; but those who had served him with less fidelity separated from him, and some showed him even indifference, or even full hostility, which afterwards was apparent; and also it could be seen clearly in many Upland people that they took very ill his putting Thorer to death, as before related. King Olaf gave leave to return home to many of his men who had farms and children to take care of; for it seemed to them uncertain what safety there might be for the families and property of those who left the country with him. Then the king explained to his friends his intention of leaving the country, and going first east into Svithjod, and there taking his determination as to where he should go; but he let his friends know his intention to return to the country, and regain his kingdoms, if God should grant him longer life; and he did not conceal his expectation that the people of Norway would again return to their fealty to him. "I think," says he, "that Earl Hakon will have Norway but a short time under his power, which many will not think an extraordinary expectation, as Earl Hakon has had but little luck against me; but probably few people will trust to my prophecy, that Canute the Great will in the course of a few years die, and his kingdoms vanish; and there will be no risings in favour of his race." When the king had ended his speech, his men prepared themselves for their departure. The king, with the troop that followed him, turned east to Eid forest. And there were along with him the Queen Astrid; their daughter Ulfhild; Magnus, King Olaf's son; Ragnvald Brusason; the three sons of Arne, Thorberg, Fin, and Arne, with many lendermen; and the king's attendants consisted of many chosen men. Bjorn the marshal got leave to go home, and he went to his farm, and many others of the king's friends returned home with his permission to their farms. The king begged them to let him know the events which might happen in the country, and which it might be

important for him to know; and now the king proceeded on his way.

191. KING OLAF PROCEEDS TO RUSSIA.

It is to be related of King Olaf's journey, that he went first from Norway eastward through Eid forest to Vermaland, then to Vatsnby, and through the forests in which there are roads, until he came out in Nerike district. There dwelt a rich and powerful man in that part called Sigtryg, who had a son, Ivar, who afterwards became a distinguished person. Olaf stayed with Sigtryg all spring (A.D. 1029); and when summer came he made ready for a journey, procured a ship for himself, and without stopping went on to Russia to King Jarisleif and his queen Ingegerd; but his own queen Astrid, and their daughter Ulfhild, remained behind in Svithjod, and the king took his son Magnus eastward with him. King Jarisleif received King Olaf in the kindest manner, and made him the offer to remain with him, and to have so much land as was necessary for defraying the expense of the entertainment of his followers. King Olaf accepted this offer thankfully, and remained there. It is related that King Olaf was distinguished all his life for pious habits, and zeal in his prayers to God. But afterwards, when he saw his own power diminished, and that of his adversaries augmented, he turned all his mind to God's service; for he was not distracted by other thoughts, or by the labour he formerly had upon his hands, for during all the time he sat upon the throne he was endeavouring to promote what was most useful: and first to free and protect the country from foreign chiefs' oppressions, then to convert the people to the right faith; and also to establish law and the rights of the country, which he did by letting justice have its way, and punishing evil-doers.

192. CAUSES OF THE REVOLT AGAINST KING OLAF.

It had been an old custom in Norway that the sons of lendersmen, or other great men, went out in war-ships to gather property, and they marauded both in the country and out of the country. But after King Olaf came to the sovereignty he protected the country, so that he abolished all plundering there; and even if they were the sons of powerful men who committed any depredation, or did what the king considered against law, he did not spare them at all, but they must suffer in life or limbs; and no man's entreaties, and no offer of money-penalties, could help them. So says Sigvat:—

They who on viking cruises drove
With gifts of red gold often strove
To buy their safety—but our chief
Had no compassion for the thief.
He made the bravest lose his head
Who robbed at sea, and pirates led;
And his just sword gave peace to all,
Sparing no robber, great or small.

And he also says:—

Great king! whose sword on many a field
Food to the wandering wolf did yield,
And then the thief and pirate band
Swept wholly off by sea and land—
Good king! who for the people's sake
Set hands and feet upon a stake,
When plunderers of great name and bold
Harried the country as of old.
The country's guardian showed his might
When oft he made his just sword bite
Through many a viking's neck and hair,
And never would the guilty spare.
King Magnus' father, I must say,
Did many a good deed in his day.
Olaf the Thick was stern and stout,
Much good his victories brought out.

He punished great and small with equal severity, which appeared to the chief people of the country too severe; and animosity rose to the highest when they lost relatives by the king's just sentence, although they were in reality guilty. This was the origin of the hostility of the great men of the country to King Olaf, that they could not bear his just judgments. He again would rather renounce his dignity than omit righteous judgment. The accusation against him, of being stingy with his money, was not just, for he was a most generous man towards his friends; but that alone was

the cause of the discontent raised against him, that he appeared hard and severe in his retributions. Besides, King Canute offered great sums of money, and the great chiefs were corrupted by this, and by his offering them greater dignities than they had possessed before. The inclinations of the people, also, were all in favour of Earl Hakon, who was much beloved by the country folks when he ruled the country before.

193. OF JOKUL BARDSON.

Earl Hakon had sailed with his fleet from Thronthjem, and gone south to More against King Olaf, as before related. Now when the king bore away, and ran into the fjord, the earl followed him thither; and then Kalf Arnason came to meet him, with many of the men who had deserted King Olaf. Kalf was well received. The earl steered in through Todar fjord to Valdal, where the king had laid up his ships on the strand. He took the ships which belonged to the king, had them put upon the water and rigged, and cast lots, and put commanders in charge of them according to the lots. There was a man called Jokul, who was an Icelander, a son of Bard Jokulson of Vatsnsdal; the lot fell upon Jokul to command the Bisons, which King Olaf himself had commanded. Jokul made these verses upon it:—

Mine is the lot to take the helm
Which Olaf owned, who owned the realm;
From Sult King Olaf's ship to steer
(Ill luck I dread on his reindeer).
My girl will never hear the tidings,
Till o'er the wild wave I come riding
In Olaf's ship, who loved his gold,
And lost his ships with wealth untold.

We may here shortly tell what happened a long time after.—that this Jokul fell in with King Olaf's men in the island of Gotland, and the king ordered him to be taken out to be beheaded. A willow twig accordingly was plaited in with his hair, and a man held him fast by it. Jokul sat down upon a bank, and a man swung the axe to execute him; but Jokul hearing the sound, raised his head, and the blow struck him in the head, and made a dreadful wound. As the king saw it would be his death-wound, he ordered them to let him lie with it. Jokul raised himself up, and he sang:—

My hard fate I mourn,—
Alas! my wounds burn,
My red wounds are gaping,
My life-blood escaping.
My wounds burn sore;
But I suffer still more
From the king's angry word,
Than his sharp-biting sword.

194. OF KALF ARNASON.

Kalf Arnason went with Earl Hakon north to Thronthjem, and the earl invited him to enter into his service. Kalf said he would first go home to his farm at Eggja, and afterwards make his determination; and Kalf did so. When he came home he found his wife Sigrid much irritated; and she reckoned up all the sorrow inflicted on her, as she insisted, by King Olaf. First, he had ordered her first husband Olver to be killed. "And now since," says she, "my two sons; and thou thyself, Kalf, wert present when they were cut off, and which I little expected from thee." Kalf says, it was much against his will that Thorer was killed. "I offered money-penalty for him," says he; "and when Grjotgard was killed I lost my brother Arnbjorn at the same time." She replies, "It is well thou hast suffered this from the king; for thou mayest perhaps avenge him, although thou wilt not avenge my injuries. Thou sawest how thy foster-son Thorer was killed, with all the regard of the king for thee." She frequently brought out such vexatious speeches to Kalf, to which he often answered angrily; but yet he allowed himself to be persuaded by her to enter into the earl's service, on condition of renewing his fiefs to him. Sigrid sent word to the earl how far she had brought the matter with Kalf. As soon as the earl heard of it, he sent a message to Kalf that he should come to the town to him. Kalf did not decline the invitation, but came directly to Nidaros, and waited on the earl, who received him kindly. In their conversation it was fully agreed upon that Kalf should go into the earl's service, and should receive great fiefs. After this Kalf returned home, and had the greater part of the interior of the

Throndhjem country under him. As soon as it was spring Kalf rigged out a ship that belonged to him, and when she was ready he put to sea, and sailed west to England; for he had heard that in spring King Canute was to sail from Denmark to England, and that King Canute had given Harald, a son of Thorkel the High, an earldom in Denmark. Kalf Arnason went to King Canute as soon as he arrived in England. Bjarne Gullbrarskald tells of this:—

King Olaf eastward o'er the sea
To Russia's monarch had to flee;
Our Harald's brother ploughed the main,
And furrowed white its dark-blue plain.
Whilst thou—the truth I still will say,
Nor fear nor favour can me sway—
Thou to King Canute hastened fast,
As soon as Olaf's luck was past.

Now when Kalf came to King Canute the king received him particularly well, and had many conversations with him. Among other things, King Canute, in a conference, asked Kalf to bind himself to raise a warfare against King Olaf, if ever he should return to the country. "And for which," says the king, "I will give thee the earldom, and place thee to rule over Norway; and my relation Hakon shall come to me, which will suit him better, for he is so honourable and trustworthy that I believe he would not even throw a spear against the person of King Olaf if he came back to the country." Kalf lent his ear to what the king proposed, for he had a great desire to attain this high dignity; and this conclusion was settled upon between King Canute and Kalf. Kalf then prepared to return home, and on his departure he received splendid presents from King Canute. Bjarne the skald tells of these circumstances:—

Sprung from old earls!—to England's lord
Thou owest many a thankful word
For many a gift: if all be true,
Thy interest has been kept in view;
For when thy course was bent for home,
(Although that luck is not yet come),
'That Norway should be thine,' 'tis said,
The London king a promise made.

Kalf thereafter returned to Norway, and came to his farm.

195. OF THE DEATH OF EARL HAKON.

Earl Hakon left the country this summer (A.D. 1029), and went to England, and when he came there was well received by the king. The earl had a bride in England, and he travelled to conclude this marriage, and as he intended holding his wedding in Norway, he came to procure those things for it in England which it was difficult to get in Norway. In autumn he made ready for his return, but it was somewhat late before he was clear for sea; but at last he set out. Of his voyage all that can be told is, that the vessel was lost, and not a man escaped. Some relate that the vessel was seen north of Caithness in the evening in a heavy storm, and the wind blowing out of Pentland Firth. They who believe this report say the vessel drove out among the breakers of the ocean; but with certainty people knew only that Earl Hakon was missing in the ocean, and nothing belonging to the ship ever came to land. The same autumn some merchants came to Norway, who told the tidings that were going through the country of Earl Hakon being missing; and all men knew that he neither came to Norway nor to England that autumn, so that Norway that winter was without a head.

196. OF BJORN THE MARSHAL.

Bjorn the marshal sat at home on his farm after his parting from King Olaf. Bjorn was a celebrated man; therefore it was soon reported far and wide that he had set himself down in quietness. Earl Hakon and the other chiefs of the country heard this also, and sent persons with a verbal message to Bjorn. When the messengers arrived Bjorn received them well; and afterwards Bjorn called them to him to a conference, and asked their business. He who was their foreman presented to Bjorn the salutations of King Canute, Earl Hakon, and of several chiefs. "King Canute," says he, "has heard much of thee, and that thou hast been long a follower of King Olaf the Thick, and hast been a great enemy of King Canute; and this he thinks not right, for he will be thy friend, and the friend of all worthy men, if thou wilt turn from thy friendship to King Olaf

and become his enemy. And the only thing now thou canst do is to seek friendship and protection there where it is most readily to be found, and which all men in this northern world think it most honourable to be favoured with. Ye who have followed Olaf the Thick should consider how he is now separated from you; and that now ye have no aid against King Canute and his men, whose lands ye plundered last summer, and whose friends ye murdered. Therefore ye ought to accept, with thanks, the friendship which the king offers you; and it would become you better if you offered money even in mulct to obtain it."

When he had ended his speech Bjorn replies, "I wish now to sit quietly at home, and not to enter into the service of any chief."

The messenger answers, "Such men as thou art are just the right men to serve the king; and now I can tell thee there are just two things for thee to choose,—either to depart in peace from thy property, and wander about as thy comrade Olaf is doing; or, which is evidently better, to accept King Canute's and Earl Hakon's friendship, become their man, and take the oaths of fealty to them. Receive now thy reward." And he displayed to him a large bag full of English money.

Bjorn was a man fond of money, and self-interested; and when he saw the silver he was silent, and reflected with himself what resolution he should take. It seemed to him much to abandon his property, as he did not think it probable that King Olaf would ever have a rising in his favour in Norway. Now when the messenger saw that Bjorn's inclinations were turned towards the money, he threw down two thick gold rings, and said, "Take the money at once, Bjorn, and swear the oaths to King Canute; for I can promise thee that this money is but a trifle, compared to what thou wilt receive if thou followest King Canute."

By the heap of money, the fine promises, and the great presents, he was led by covetousness, took the money, went into King Canute's service, and gave the oaths of fealty to King Canute and Earl Hakon, and then the messengers departed.

197. BJORN THE MARSHAL'S JOURNEY.

When Bjorn heard the tidings that Earl Hakon was missing he soon altered his mind, and was much vexed with himself for having been a traitor in his fidelity to King Olaf. He thought, now, that he was freed from the oath by which he had bound himself to Earl Hakon. It seemed to Bjorn that now there was some hope that King Olaf might again come to the throne of Norway if he came back, as the country was without a head. Bjorn therefore immediately made himself ready to travel, and took some men with him. He then set out on his journey, travelling night and day, on horseback when he could, and by ship when he found occasion; and never halted until he came, after Yule, east to Russia to King Olaf, who was very glad to see Bjorn. Then the king inquired much about the news from Norway. Bjorn tells him that Earl Hakon was missing, and the kingdom left without a head. At this news the men who had followed King Olaf were very glad,—all who had left property, connections, and friends in Norway; and the longing for home was awakened in them. Bjorn told King Olaf much news from Norway, and very anxious the king was to know, and asked much how his friends had kept their fidelity towards him. Bjorn answered, it had gone differently with different people.

Then Bjorn stood up, fell at the king's feet, held his foot, and said, "All is in your power, sire, and in God's! I have taken money from King Canute's men, and sworn them the oaths of fealty; but now will I follow thee, and not part from thee so long as we both live."

The king replies, "Stand up, Bjorn' thou shalt be reconciled with me; but reconcile thy perjury with God. I can see that but few men in Norway have held fast by their fealty, when such men as thou art could be false to me. But true it is also that people sit in great danger when I am distant, and they are exposed to the wrath of my enemies."

Bjorn then reckoned up those who had principally bound themselves to rise in hostility against the king and his men; and named, among others, Erling's son in Jadar and their connections, Einar Tambaskelfer, Kalf Arnason, Thoror Hund, and Harek of Thjotta.

198. OF KING OLAF.

After King Olaf came to Russia he was very thoughtful, and weighed what counsel he now should follow. King Jarisleif and Queen Ingegerd offered him to remain with them, and receive a kingdom called Vulgaria, which is a part of Russia, and in which land the people were still heathen. King Olaf thought over this offer; but when he proposed it to his men they dissuaded him from settling himself there, and urged the king to betake himself to Norway to his own kingdom: but the king himself had resolved almost in his own mind to lay down his royal dignity, to go out into the world to Jerusalem, or other holy places, and to enter into some order of monks. But yet the thought lay deep in his soul to recover again, if there should be any opportunity for him, his kingdom in Norway. When he thought over this, it recurred to his mind how all things had gone prosperously with him during the first ten years of his reign, and how afterwards every thing he undertook became heavy, difficult, and hard; and that he had been unlucky, on all occasions in which he had tried his luck. On this account he doubted if it would be prudent to depend so much upon his luck, as to go with so little strength into the hands of his enemies, seeing that all the people of the country had taken part with them to oppose King Olaf. Such cares he had often on his mind, and he left his cause to God, praying that He would do what to Him seemed best. These thoughts he turned over in his mind, and knew not what to resolve upon; for he saw how evidently dangerous that was which his inclination was most bent upon.

199. OF KING OLAF'S DREAM.

One night the king lay awake in his bed, thinking with great anxiety about his determination, and at last, being tired of thinking, sleep came over him towards morning; but his sleep was so light that he thought he was awake, and could see all that was doing in the house. Then he saw a great and superb man, in splendid clothes, standing by his bed; and it came into the king's mind that this was King Olaf Trygvason who had come to him. This man said to him, "Thou art very sick of thinking about thy future resolutions; and it appears to me wonderful that these thoughts should be so tumultuous in thy soul that thou shouldst even think of laying down the kingly dignity which God hath given thee, and of remaining here and accepting of a kingdom from foreign and unknown kings. Go back rather to that kingdom which thou hast received in heritage, and rule over it with the strength which God hath given thee, and let not thy inferiors take it from thee. It is the glory of a king to be victorious over his enemies, and it is a glorious death to die in battle. Or art thou doubtful if thou hast right on thy side in the strife with thine enemies? Thou must have no doubts, and must not conceal the truth from thyself. Thou must go back to thy country, and God will give open testimony that the kingdom is thine by property." When the king awoke he thought he saw the man's shoulders going out. From this time the king's courage rose, and he fixed firmly his resolution to return to Norway; to which his inclination also tended most, and which he also found was the desire of all his men. He bethought himself also that the country being without a chief could be easily attacked, from what he had heard, and that after he came himself many would turn back towards him. When the king told his determination to his people they all gave it their approbation joyfully.

200. OF KING OLAF'S HEALING POWERS.

It is related that once upon a time, while King Olaf was in Russia, it happened that the son of an honest widow had a sore boil upon his neck, of which the lad lay very ill; and as he could not swallow any food, there was little hope of his life. The boy's mother went to Queen Ingegerd, with whom she was acquainted, and showed her the lad. The queen said she knew no remedy for it. "Go," said she, "to King Olaf, he is the best physician here; and beg him to lay his hands on thy lad, and bring him my words if he will not otherwise do it." She did as the queen told her; and when she found the king she says to him that her son is dangerously ill of a boil in his neck, and begs him to lay his hand on the boil. The king tells her he is not a physician, and bids her go to where there were

physicians. She replies, that the queen had told her to come to him; "and told me to add the request from her, that you would use the remedy you understood, and she said that thou art the best physician here in the town." Then the king took the lad, laid his hands upon his neck, and felt the boil for a long time, until the boy made a very wry face. Then the king took a piece of bread, laid it in the figure of the cross upon the palm of his hand, and put it into the boy's mouth. He swallowed it down, and from that time all the soreness left his neck, and in a few days he was quite well, to the great joy of his mother and all his relations. Then first came Olaf into the repute of having as much healing power in his hands as is ascribed to men who have been gifted by nature with healing by the touch; and afterwards when his miracles were universally acknowledged, this also was considered one of his miracles.

201. KING OLAF BURNS THE WOOD SHAVINGS ON HIS HAND FOR HIS SABBATH BREACH.

It happened one Sunday that the king sat in his highseat at the dinner table, and had fallen into such deep thought that he did not observe how time went. In one hand he had a knife, and in the other a piece of fir-wood from which he cut splinters from time to time. The table-servant stood before him with a bowl in his hands; and seeing what the king was about, and that he was involved in thought, he said, "It is Monday, sire, to-morrow." The king looked at him when he heard this, and then it came into his mind what he was doing on the Sunday. Then the king ordered a lighted candle to be brought him, swept together all the shavings he had made, set them on fire, and let them burn upon his naked hand; showing thereby that he would hold fast by God's law and commandment, and not trespass without punishment on what he knew to be right.

202. OF KING OLAF.

When King Olaf had resolved on his return home, he made known his intention to King Jarisleif and Queen Ingegerd. They dissuaded him from this expedition, and said he should receive as much power in their dominions as he thought desirable; but begged him not to put himself within the reach of his enemies with so few men as he had. Then King Olaf told them of his dream; adding, that he believed it to be God's will and providence that it should be so. Now when they found he was determined on travelling to Norway, they offered him all the assistance to his journey that he would accept from them. The king thanked them in many fine words for their good will; and said that he accepted from them, with no ordinary pleasure, what might be necessary for his undertaking.

203. OF KING OLAF'S JOURNEY FROM RUSSIA.

Immediately after Yule (A.D. 1080), King Olaf made himself ready; and had about 200 of his men with him. King Jarisleif gave him all the horses, and whatever else he required; and when he was ready he set off. King Jarisleif and Queen Ingegerd parted from him with all honour; and he left his son Magnus behind with the king. The first part of his journey, down to the sea-coast, King Olaf and his men made on the ice; but as spring approached, and the ice broke up, they rigged their vessels, and when they were ready and got a wind they set out to sea, and had a good voyage. When Olaf came to the island of Gotland with his ships he heard the news—which was told as truth, both in Svithjod, Denmark, and over all Norway—that Earl Hakon was missing, and Norway without a head. This gave the king and his men good hope of the issue of their journey. From thence they sailed, when the wind suited, to Svithjod, and went into the Maelar lake, to Aros, and sent men to the Swedish King Onund appointing a meeting. King Onund received his brother-in-law's message in the kindest manner, and went to him according to his invitation. Astrid also came to King Olaf, with the men who had attended her; and great was the joy on all sides at this meeting. The Swedish king also received his brother-in-law King Olaf with great joy when they met.

204. OF THE LENDERMEN IN NORWAY.

Now we must relate what, in the meantime, was going on in Norway. Thorer Hund, in these two winters (A.D. 1029-1030), had made a Lapland journey, and each winter had been a long time on the mountains, and had gathered to himself great wealth by trading in various wares with the Laplanders. He had twelve large coats of reindeer-skin made for him, with so much Lapland witchcraft that no weapon could cut or pierce them any more than if they were armour of ring-mail, nor so much. The spring thereafter Thorer rigged a long-ship which belonged to him, and manned it with his house-servants. He summoned the bondes, demanded a levy from the most northern Thing district, collected in this way a great many people, and proceeded with this force southwards. Harek of Thjotta had also collected a great number of people; and in this expedition many people of consequence took a part, although these two were the most distinguished. They made it known publicly that with this war-force they were going against King Olaf, to defend the country against him, in case he should come from the eastward.

205. OF EINAR TAMBASKELFER.

Einar Tambaskelfer had most influence in the outer part of the Thronhjelm country after Earl Hakon's death was no longer doubtful; for he and his son Eindride appeared to be the nearest heirs to the movable property the earl had possessed. Then Einar remembered the promises and offers of friendship which King Canute had made him at parting; and he ordered a good vessel which belonged to him to be got ready, and embarked with a great retinue, and when he was ready sailed southwards along the coast, then set out to sea westwards, and sailed without stopping until he came to England. He immediately waited on King Canute, who received him well and joyfully. Then Einar opened his business to the king, and said he was come there to see the fulfillment of the promises the king had made him; namely, that he, Einar, should have the highest title of honour in Norway if Earl Hakon were no more. King Canute replies, that now the circumstances were altered. "I have now," said he, "sent men and tokens to my son Svein in Denmark, and promised him the kingdom of Norway; but thou shalt retain my friendship, and get the dignity and title which thou art entitled by birth to hold. Thou shalt be lenderman with great fiefs, and be so much more raised above other lendermen as thou art more able than they." Einar saw sufficiently how matters stood with regard to his business, and got ready to return home; but as he now knew the king's intentions, and thought it probable if King Olaf came from the East the country would not be very peaceable, it came into his mind that it would be better to proceed slowly, and not to be hastening his voyage, in order to fight against King Olaf, without his being advanced by it to any higher dignity than he had before. Einar accordingly went to sea when he was ready; but only came to Norway after the events were ended which took place there during that summer.

206. OF THE CHIEF PEOPLE IN NORWAY.

The chiefs in Norway had their spies east in Svithjod, and south in Denmark, to find out if King Olaf had come from Russia. As soon as these men could get across the country, they heard the news that King Olaf was arrived in Svithjod; and as soon as full certainty of this was obtained, the war message-token went round the land. The whole people were called out to a levy, and a great army was collected. The lendermen who were from Agder, Rogaland, and Hordaland, divided themselves, so that some went towards the north, and some towards the east; for they thought they required people on both sides. Erling's sons from Jadar went eastward, with all the men who lived east of them, and over whom they were chiefs; Aslak of Finey, and Erlend of Gerde, with the lendermen north of them, went towards the north. All those now named had sworn an oath to King Canute to deprive Olaf of life, if opportunity should offer.

207. OF HARALD SIGURDSON'S PROCEEDINGS.

Now when it was reported in Norway that King Olaf was come from the East to Svithjod, his friends gathered together to give him aid. The most distinguished man in this flock was Harald Sigurdson, a brother of King Olaf, who then was fifteen years of age, very stout, and manly of growth as if he were full-grown. Many other brave men were there also; and there were in all 600 men when they proceeded from the uplands, and went eastward with their force through Eid forest to Vermaland. From thence they went eastward through the forests to Svithjod and made inquiry about King Olaf's proceedings.

208. OF KING OLAF'S PROCEEDINGS IN SVITHJOD.

King Olaf was in Svithjod in spring (A.D. 1030), and had sent spies from thence to Norway. All accounts from that quarter agreed that there was no safety for him if he went there, and the people who came from the north dissuaded him much from penetrating into the country. But he had firmly resolved within himself, as before stated, to go into Norway; and he asked King Onund what strength King Onund would give him to conquer his kingdom. King Onund replied, that the Swedes were little inclined to make an expedition against Norway. "We know," says he, "that the Northmen are rough and warlike, and it is dangerous to carry hostility to their doors, but I will not be slow in telling thee what aid I can give. I will give thee 400 chosen men from my court-men, active and warlike, and well equip for battle; and moreover will give thee leave to go through my country, and gather to thyself as many men as thou canst get to follow thee." King Olaf accepted this offer, and got ready for his march. Queen Astrid, and Ulfhild the king's daughter, remained behind in Svithjod.

209. KING OLAF ADVANCES TO JARNBERALAND.

Just as King Olaf began his journey the men came to him whom the Swedish king had given, in all 400 men, and the king took the road the Swedes showed him. He advanced upwards in the country to the forests, and came to a district called Jarnberaland. Here the people joined him who had come out of Norway to meet him, as before related; and he met here his brother Harald, and many other of his relations, and it was a joyful meeting. They made out together 1200 men.

210. OF DAG HRINGSON.

There was a man called Dag, who is said to have been a son of King Hring, who fled the country from King Olaf. This Hring, it is said further, had been a son of Dag, and grandson of Hring, Harald Harfager's son. Thus was Dag King Olaf's relative. Both Hring the father, and Dag the son, had settled themselves in Svithjod, and got land to rule over. In spring, when Olaf came from the East to Svithjod, he sent a message to his relation Dag, that he should join him in this expedition with all the force he could collect; and if they gained the country of Norway again, Dag should have no smaller part of the kingdom under him than his forefathers had enjoyed. When this message came to Dag it suited his inclination well, for he had a great desire to go to Norway and get the dominion his family had ruled over. He was not slow, therefore, to reply, and promised to come. Dag was a quick-speaking, quick-resolving man, mixing himself up in everything; eager, but of little understanding. He collected a force of almost 1200 men, with which he joined King Olaf.

211. OF KING OLAF'S JOURNEY.

King Olaf sent a message before him to all the inhabited places he passed through, that the men who wished to get goods and money, and share of booty, and the lands besides which now were in the hands of his enemies, should come to him, and follow him. Thereafter King Olaf led his army through forests, often over desert moors, and often over large lakes; and they dragged, or carried the boats, from lake to lake. On the way a great many followers joined

the king, partly forest settlers, partly vagabonds. The places at which he halted for the night are since called Olaf's Booths. He proceeded without any break upon his journey until he came to Jamtaland, from which he marched north over the keel or ridge of the land. The men spread themselves over the hamlets, and proceeded, much scattered, so long as no enemy was expected; but always, when so dispersed, the Northmen accompanied the king. Dag proceeded with his men on another line of march, and the Swedes on a third with their troop.

212. OF VAGABOND-MEN.

There were two men, the one called Gauka-Thorer, the other Afrafaste, who were vagabonds and great robbers, and had a company of thirty men such as themselves. These two men were larger and stronger than other men, and they wanted neither courage nor impudence. These men heard speak of the army that was crossing the country, and said among themselves it would be a clever counsel to go to the king, follow him to his country, and go with him into a regular battle, and try themselves in this work; for they had never been in any battle in which people were regularly drawn up in line, and they were curious to see the king's order of battle. This counsel was approved of by their comrades, and accordingly they went to the road on which King Olaf was to pass. When they came there they presented themselves to the king, with their followers, fully armed. They saluted him, and he asked what people they were. They told their names, and said they were natives of the place; and told their errand, and that they wished to go with the king. The king said, it appeared to him there was good help in such folks. "And I have a great inclination," said he, "to take such; but are ye Christian men?"

Gauka-Thorer replies, that he is neither Christian nor heathen. "I and my comrades have no faith but on ourselves, our strength, and the luck of victory; and with this faith we slip through sufficiently well."

The king replies, "A great pity it is that such brave slaughtering fellows did not believe in Christ their Creator."

Thorer replies, "Is there any Christian man, king, in thy following, who stands so high in the air as we two brothers?"

The king told them to let themselves be baptized, and to accept the true faith. "Follow me then, and I will advance you to great dignities; but if ye will not do so, return to your former vocation."

Afrafaste said he would not take on Christianity, and he turned away.

Then said Gauka-Thorer, "It is a great shame that the king drives us thus away from his army, and I never before came where I was not received into the company of other people, and I shall never return back on this account." They joined accordingly the rear with other forest-men, and followed the troops. Thereafter the king proceeded west up to the keel-ridge of the country.

213. OF KING OLAF'S VISION.

Now when King Olaf, coming from the east, went over the keel-ridge and descended on the west side of the mountain, where it declines towards the sea, he could see from thence far over the country. Many people rode before the king and many after, and he himself rode so that there was a free space around him. He was silent, and nobody spoke to him, and thus he rode a great part of the day without looking much about him. Then the bishop rode up to him, asked him why he was so silent, and what he was thinking of; for, in general, he was very cheerful, and very talkative on a journey to his men, so that all who were near him were merry. The king replied, full of thought, "Wonderful things have come into my mind a while ago. As I just now looked over Norway, out to the west from the mountains, it came into my mind how many happy days I have had in that land. It appeared to me at first as if I saw over all the Thronthjem country, and then over all Norway; and the longer this vision was before my eyes the farther, methought, I saw, until I looked over the whole wide world, both land and sea. Well I know the places at which I have been in former days; some even which I have only heard speak of, and some I saw of which I had never heard, both inhabited and uninhabited, in this wide

world." The bishop replied that this was a holy vision, and very remarkable.

214. OF THE MIRACLE ON THE CORN LAND.

When the king had come lower down on the mountain, there lay a farm before him called Sula, on the highest part of Veradal district; and as they came nearer to the house the corn-land appeared on both sides of the path. The king told his people to proceed carefully, and not destroy the corn to the bondes. The people observed this when the king was near; but the crowd behind paid no attention to it, and the people ran over the corn, so that it was trodden flat to the earth. There dwelt a bonde there called Thorgeir Flek, who had two sons nearly grown up. Thorgeir received the king and his people well, and offered all the assistance in his power. The king was pleased with his offer, and asked Thorgeir what was the news of the country, and if any forces were assembled against him. Thorgeir says that a great army was drawn together in the Thronthjem country, and that there were some lendermen both from the south of the country, and from Halogaland in the north; "but I do not know," says he, "if they are intended against you, or going elsewhere." Then he complained to the king of the damage and waste done him by the people breaking and treading down all his corn fields. The king said it was ill done to bring upon him any loss. Then the king rode to where the corn had stood, and saw it was laid flat on the earth; and he rode round the field, and said, "I expect, bonde, that God will repair thy loss, so that the field, within a week, will be better;" and it proved the best of the corn, as the king had said. The king remained all night there, and in the morning he made himself ready, and told Thorgeir the bonde to accompany him and Thorgear offered his two sons also for the journey; and although the king said that he did not want them with him, the lads would go. As they would not stay behind, the king's court-men were about binding them; but the king seeing it said, "Let them come with us; the lads will come safe back again." And it was with the lads as the king foretold.

215. OF THE BAPTISM OF THE VAGABOND FOREST-MEN.

Thereafter the army advanced to Staf, and when the king reached Staf's moor he halted. There he got the certain information that the bondes were advancing with an army against him, and that he might soon expect to have a battle with them. He mustered his force here, and, after reckoning them up, found there were in the army 900 heathen men, and when he came to know it he ordered them to allow themselves to be baptized, saying that he would have no heathens with him in battle. "We must not," says he, "put our confidence in numbers, but in God alone must we trust; for through his power and favour we must be victorious, and I will not mix heathen people with my own." When the heathens heard this, they held a council among themselves, and at last 400 men agreed to be baptized; but 500 men refused to adopt Christianity, and that body returned home to their land. Then the brothers Gauka-Thorer and Afrafaste presented themselves to the king, and offered again to follow him. The king asked if they had now taken baptism. Gauka-Thorer replied that they had not. Then the king ordered them to accept baptism and the true faith, or otherwise to go away. They stepped aside to talk with each other on what resolution they should take. Afrafaste said, "To give my opinion, I will not turn back, but go into the battle, and take a part on the one side or the other; and I don't care much in which army I am." Gauka-Thorer replies, "If I go into battle I will give my help to the king, for he has most need of help. And if I must believe in a God, why not in the white Christ as well as in any other? Now it is my advice, therefore, that we let ourselves be baptized, since the king insists so much upon it, and then go into the battle with him." They all agreed to this, and went to the king, and said they would receive baptism. Then they were baptized by a priest, and the baptism was confirmed by the bishop. The king then took them into the troop of his court-men, and said they should fight under his banner in the battle.

216. KING OLAF'S SPEECH.

King Olaf got certain intelligence now that it would be but a short time until he had a battle with the bondes; and after he had mustered his men, and reckoned up the force, he had more than 3000 men, which appears to be a great army in one field. Then the king made the following speech to the people: "We have a great army, and excellent troops; and now I will tell you, my men, how I will have our force drawn up. I will let my banner go forward in the middle of the army, and my-court-men, and pursuivants shall follow it, together with the war forces that joined us from the Up-lands, and also those who may come to us here in the Throndhjem land. On the right hand of my banner shall be Dag Hringson, with all the men he brought to our aid; and he shall have the second banner. And on the left hand of our line shall the men be whom the Swedish king gave us, together with all the people who came to us in Sweden; and they shall have the third banner. I will also have the people divide themselves into distinct flocks or parcels, so that relations and acquaintances should be together; for thus they defend each other best, and know each other. We will have all our men distinguished by a mark, so as to be a field-token upon their helmets and shields, by painting the holy cross thereupon with white colour. When we come into battle we shall all have one countersign and field-cry,—'Forward, forward, Christian men! cross men! king's men!' We must draw up our men in thinner ranks, because we have fewer people, and I do not wish to let them surround us with their men. Now let the men divide themselves into separate flocks, and then each flock into ranks; then let each man observe well his proper place, and take notice what banner he is drawn up under. And now we shall remain drawn up in array; and our men shall be fully armed, night and day, until we know where the meeting shall be between us and the bondes." When the king had finished speaking, the army arrayed, and arranged itself according to the king's orders.

217. KING OLAF'S COUNSEL.

Thereafter the king had a meeting with the chiefs of the different divisions, and then the men had returned whom the king had sent out into the neighbouring districts to demand men from the bondes. They brought the tidings from the inhabited places they had gone through, that all around the country was stripped of all men able to carry arms, as all the people had joined the bondes' army; and where they did find any they got but few to follow them, for the most of them answered that they stayed at home because they would not follow either party: they would not go out against the king, nor yet against their own relations. Thus they had got but few people. Now the king asked his men their counsel, and what they now should do. Fin Arnason answered thus to the king's question: "I will say what should be done, if I may advise. We should go with armed hand over all the inhabited places, plunder all the goods, and burn all the habitations, and leave not a hut standing, and thus punish the bondes for their treason against their sovereign. I think many a man will then cast himself loose from the bondes' army, when he sees smoke and flame at home on his farm, and does not know how it is going with children, wives, or old men, fathers, mothers, and other connections. I expect also," he added, "that if we succeed in breaking the assembled host, their ranks will soon be thinned; for so it is with the bondes, that the counsel which is the newest is always the dearest to them all, and most followed." When Fin had ended his speech it met with general applause; for many thought well of such a good occasion to make booty, and all thought the bondes well deserved to suffer damage; and they also thought it probable, what Fin said, that many would in this way be brought to forsake the assembled army of the bondes.

Now when the king heard the warm expressions of his people he told them to listen to him, and said, "The bondes have well deserved that it should be done to them as ye desire. They also know that I have formerly done so, burning their habitations, and punishing them severely in many ways; but then I proceeded against them with fire and sword because they rejected the true faith, betook themselves to sacrifices, and would not obey my commands. We had then God's honour to defend. But this treason against

their sovereign is a much less grievous crime, although it does not become men who have any manhood in them to break the faith and vows they have sworn to me. Now, however, it is more in my power to spare those who have dealt ill with me, than those whom God hated. I will, therefore, that my people proceed gently, and commit no ravage. First, I will proceed to meet the bondes; if we can then come to a reconciliation, it is well; but if they will fight with us, then there are two things before us; either we fail in the battle, and then it will be well advised not to have to retire encumbered with spoil and cattle; or we gain the victory, and then ye will be the heirs of all who fight now against us; for some will fall, and others will fly, but both will have forfeited their goods and properties, and then it will be good to enter into full houses and well-stocked farms; but what is burnt is of use to no man, and with pillage and force more is wasted than what turns to use. Now we will spread out far through the inhabited places, and take with us all the men we can find able to carry arms. Then men will also capture cattle for slaughter, or whatever else of provision that can serve for food; but not do any other ravage. But I will see willingly that ye kill any spies of the bonde army ye may fall in with. Dag and his people shall go by the north side down along the valley, and I will go on along the country road, and so we shall meet in the evening, and all have one night quarter."

218. OF KING OLAF'S SKALDS.

It is related that when King Olaf drew up his men in battle order, he made a shield rampart with his troop that should defend him in battle, for which he selected the strongest and boldest. Thereafter he called his skalds, and ordered them to go in within the shield defence. "Ye shall," says the king, "remain here, and see the circumstances which may take place, and then ye will not have to follow the reports of others in what ye afterwards tell or sing concerning it." There were Thormod Kolbrunarskald, Gissur Gulbraskald, a foster-son of Hofgardaref, and Thorfin Mun. Then said Thormod to Gissur, "Let us not stand so close together, brother, that Sigvat the skald should not find room when he comes. He must stand before the king, and the king will not have it otherwise." The king heard this, and said, "Ye need not sneer at Sigvat, because he is not here. Often has he followed me well, and now he is praying for us, and that we greatly need." Thormod replies, "It may be, sire, that ye now require prayers most; but it would be thin around the banner-staff if all thy court-men were now on the way to Rome. True it was what we spoke about, that no man who would speak with you could find room for Sigvat."

Thereafter the skalds talked among themselves that it would be well to compose a few songs of remembrance about the events which would soon be taking place.

Then Gissur sang:—

From me shall bende girl never hear
A thought of sorrow, care, or fear:
I wish my girl knew how gay
We arm us for our viking fray.
Many and brave they are, we know,
Who come against us there below;
But, life or death, we, one and all,
By Norway's king will stand or fall.

And Thorfin Mun made another song, viz.:—

Dark is the cloud of men and shields,
Slow moving up through Verdal's fields:
These Verdal folks presume to bring
Their armed force against their king.
On! let us feed the carrion crow,—
Give her a feast in every blow;
And, above all, let Throndhjem's hordes
Feel the sharp edge of true men's swords.

And Thorrood sang:—

The whistling arrows pipe to battle,
Sword and shield their war-call rattle.
Up! brave men, up! the faint heart here
Finds courage when the danger's near.
Up! brave men, up! with Olaf on!
With heart and hand a field is won.
One viking cheer!—then, stead of words,
We'll speak with our death-dealing swords.

These songs were immediately got by heart by the army.

219. OF KING OLAF'S GIFTS FOR THE SOULS OF THOSE WHO SHOULD BE SLAIN.

Thereafter the king made himself ready, and marched down through the valley. His whole forces took up their night-quarter in one place, and lay down all night under their shields; but as soon as day broke the king again put his army in order, and that being done they proceeded down through the valley. Many bondes then came to the king, of whom the most joined his army; and all, as one man, told the same tale,—that the lendermen had collected an enormous army, with which they intended to give battle to the king.

The king took many marks of silver, and delivered them into the hands of a bonde, and said, "This money thou shalt conceal, and afterwards lay out, some to churches, some to priests, some to alms-men,—as gifts for the life and souls of those who fight against us, and may fall in battle."

The bonde replies, "Should you not rather give this money for the soul-mulct of your own men?"

The king says, "This money shall be given for the souls of those who stand against us in the ranks of the bondes' army, and fall by the weapons of our own men. The men who follow us to battle, and fall therein, will all be saved together with ourself."

220. OF THORMOD KOLBRUNARSKALD.

This night the king lay with his army around him on the field, as before related, and lay long awake in prayer to God, and slept but little. Towards morning a slumber fell on him, and when he awoke daylight was shooting up. The king thought it too early to awaken the army, and asked where Thormod the skald was. Thormod was at hand, and asked what was the king's pleasure. "Sing us a song," said the king. Thormod raised himself up, and sang so loud that the whole army could hear him. He began to sing the old "Bjarkamal", of which these are the first verses:—

The day is breaking,—
The house cock, shaking
His rustling wings,
While priest-bell rings,
Crows up the morn,
And touting horn
Wakes thralls to work and weep;
Ye sons of Adil, cast off sleep,
Wake up! wake up!
Nor wassail cup,
Nor maiden's jeer,
Awaits you here.
Hroff of the bow!
Har of the blow!
Up in your might! the day is breaking;
'Tis Hild's game that bides your waking.

Then the troops awoke, and when the song was ended the people thanked him for it; and it pleased many, as it was suitable to the time and occasion, and they called it the house-carle's whet. The king thanked him for the pleasure, and took a gold ring that weighed half a mark and gave it him. Thormod thanked the king for the gift, and said, "We have a good king; but it is not easy to say how long the king's life may be. It is my prayer, sire, that thou shouldst never part from me either in life or death." The king replies, "We shall all go together so long as I rule, and as ye will follow me."

Thormod says, "I hope, sire, that whether in safety or danger I may stand near you as long as I can stand, whatever we may hear of Sigvat travelling with his gold-hilted sword." Then Thormod made these lines:—

To thee, my king, I'll still be true,
Until another skald I view,
Here in the field with golden sword,
As in thy hall, with flattering word,
Thy skald shall never be a craven,
Though he may feast the croaking raven,
The warrior's fate unmoved I view,—
To thee, my king, I'll still be true.

221. KING OLAF COMES TO STIKLESTAD.

King Olaf led his army farther down through the valley, and Dag and his men went another way, and the king did not halt until he

came to Stiklestad. There he saw the bonde army spread out all around; and there were so great numbers that people were going on every footpath, and great crowds were collected far and near. They also saw there a troop which came down from Veradal, and had been out to spy. They came so close to the king's people that they knew each other. It was Hrut of Viggia, with thirty men. The king ordered his pursuivants to go out against Hrut, and make an end of him, to which his men were instantly ready. The king said to the Icelanders, "It is told me that in Iceland it is the custom that the bondes give their house-servants a sheep to slaughter; now I give you a ram to slaughter." The Icelanders were easily invited to this, and went out immediately with a few men against Hrut, and killed him and the troop that followed him. When the king came to Stiklestad he made a halt, and made the army stop, and told his people to alight from their horses and get ready for battle; and the people did as the king ordered. Then he placed his army in battle array, and raised his banner. Dag was not yet arrived with his men, so that his wing of the battle array was wanting. Then the king said the Upland men should go forward in their place, and raise their banner there. "It appears to me advisable," says the king, "that Harald my brother should not be in the battle, for he is still in the years of childhood only." Harald replies, "Certainly I shall be in the battle, for I am not so weak that I cannot handle the sword; and as to that, I have a notion of tying the sword-handle to my hand. None is more willing than I am to give the bondes a blow; so I shall go with my comrades." It is said that Harald made these lines:—

Our army's wing, where I shall stand,
I will hold good with heart and hand;
My mother's eye shall joy to see
A battered, blood-stained shield from me.
The brisk young skald should gaily go
Into the fray, give blow for blow,
Cheer on his men, gain inch by inch,
And from the spear-point never flinch.

Harald got his will, and was allowed to be in the battle.

222. OF THORGILS HALMASON.

A bonde, by name Thorgils Halmason, father to Grim the Good, dwelt in Stiklestad farm. Thorgils offered the king his assistance, and was ready to go into battle with him. The king thanked him for the offer. "I would rather," says the king, "thou shouldst not be in the fight. Do us rather the service to take care of the people who are wounded, and to bury those who may fall, when the battle is over. Should it happen, bonde, that I fall in this battle, bestow the care on my body that may be necessary, if that be not forbidden thee." Thorgils promised the king what he desired.

223. OLAF'S SPEECH.

Now when King Olaf had drawn up his army in battle array he made a speech, in which he told the people to raise their spirit, and go boldly forward, if it came to a battle. "We have," says he, "many men, and good; and although the bondes may have a somewhat larger force than we, it is fate that rules over victory. This I will make known to you solemnly, that I shall not fly from this battle, but shall either be victorious over the bondes, or fall in the fight. I will pray to God that the lot of the two may befall me which will be most to my advantage. With this we may encourage ourselves, that we have a more just cause than the bondes; and likewise that God must either protect us and our cause in this battle, or give us a far higher recompense for what we may lose here in the world than what we ourselves could ask. Should it be my lot to have anything to say after the battle, then shall I reward each of you according to his service, and to the bravery he displays in the battle; and if we gain the victory, there must be land and movables enough to divide among you, and which are now in the hands of your enemies. Let us at the first make the hardest onset, for then the consequences are soon seen. There being a great difference in the numbers, we have to expect victory from a sharp assault only; and, on the other hand, it will be heavy work for us to fight until we are tired, and unable to fight longer; for we have fewer people to relieve with than they, who can come forward at one time and retreat and rest at another. But if we advance so hard at the

first attack that those who are foremost in their ranks must turn round, then the one will fall over the other, and their destruction will be the greater the greater numbers there are together." When the king had ended his speech it was received with loud applause, and the one encouraged the other.

224. OF THORD FOLASON.

Thord Folason carried King Olaf's banner. So says Sigvat the skald, in the death-song which he composed about King Olaf, and put together according to resurrection saga:—

Thord. I have heard, by Olaf's side,
Where raged the battle's wildest tide,
Moved on, and, as by one accord
Moved with them every heart and sword.
The banner of the king on high,
Floating all splendid in the sky
From golden shaft, aloft he bore,—
The Norsemen's rallying-point of yore.

225. OF KING OLAF'S ARMOUR.

King Olaf was armed thus:—He had a gold-mounted helmet on his head; and had in one hand a white shield, on which the holy cross was inlaid in gold. In his other hand he had a lance, which to the present day stands beside the altar in Christ Church. In his belt he had a sword, which was called Hneiter, which was remarkably sharp, and of which the handle was worked with gold. He had also a strong coat of ring-mail. Sigvat the skald, speaks of this:—

A greater victory to gain,
Olaf the Stout strode o'er the plain
In strong chain armour, aid to bring
To his brave men on either wing.
High rose the fight and battle-heat,—
The clear blood ran beneath the feet
Of Swedes, who from the East came there,
In Olaf's gain or loss to share.

226. KING OLAF'S DREAM.

Now when King Olaf had drawn up his men the army of the bondes had not yet come near upon any quarter, so the king said the people should sit down and rest themselves. He sat down himself, and the people sat around him in a widespread crowd. He leaned down, and laid his head upon Fin Arnason's knee. There a slumber came upon him, and he slept a little while; but at the same time the bondes' army was seen advancing with raised banners, and the multitude of these was very great.

Then Fin awakened the king, and said that the bonde-army advanced against them.

The king awoke, and said, "Why did you waken me, Fin, and did not allow me to enjoy my dream?"

Fin: "Thou must not be dreaming; but rather thou shouldst be awake, and preparing thyself against the host which is coming down upon us; or, dost thou not see that the whole bonde-crowd is coming?"

The king replies, "They are not yet so near to us, and it would have been better to have let me sleep."

Then said Fin, "What was the dream, sire, of which the loss appears to thee so great that thou wouldst rather have been left to waken of thyself?"

Now the king told his dream,—that he seemed to see a high ladder, upon which he went so high in the air that heaven was open: for so high reached the ladder. "And when you awoke me, I was come to the highest step towards heaven."

Fin replies, "This dream does not appear to me so good as it does to thee. I think it means that thou art fey; unless it be the mere want of sleep that has worked upon thee."

227. OF ARNLJOT GELLINE'S BAPTISM.

When King Olaf was arrived at Stiklestad, it happened, among other circumstances, that a man came to him; and although it was nowise wonderful that there came many men from the districts, yet this must be regarded as unusual, that this man did not appear like the other men who came to him. He was so tall that none stood higher than up to his shoulders: very handsome he was in countenance, and had beautiful fair hair. He was well armed; had a fine helmet, and ring armour; a red shield; a superb sword in

his belt; and in his hand a gold-mounted spear, the shaft of it so thick that it was a handful to grasp. The man went before the king, saluted him, and asked if the king would accept his services.

The king asked his name and family, also what countryman he was.

He replies, "My family is in Jamtaland and Helsingjaland, and my name is Arnljot Gelline; but this I must not forget to tell you, that I came to the assistance of those men you sent to Jamtaland to collect scat, and I gave into their hands a silver dish, which I sent you as a token that I would be your friend."

Then the king asked Arnljot if he was a Christian or not. He replied, "My faith has been this, to rely upon my power and strength, and which faith hath hitherto given me satisfaction; but now I intend rather to put my faith, sire, in thee."

The king replies, "If thou wilt put faith in me thou must also put faith in what I will teach thee. Thou must believe that Jesus Christ has made heaven and earth, and all mankind, and to him shall all those who are good and rightly believing go after death."

Arnljot answers, "I have indeed heard of the white Christ, but neither know what he proposes, nor what he rules over; but now I will believe all that thou sayest to me, and lay down my lot in your hands."

Thereupon Arnljot was baptized. The king taught him so much of the holy faith as appeared to him needful, and placed him in the front rank of the order of battle, in advance of his banner, where also Gauka-Thorer and Afrafaste, with their men, were.

228. CONCERNING THE ARMY COLLECTED IN NORWAY.

Now shall we relate what we have left behind in our tale,—that the lendermen and bondes had collected a vast host as soon as it was reported that King Olaf was come from Russia, and had arrived in Svithjod; but when they heard that he had come to Jamtaland, and intended to proceed westwards over the keel-ridge to Veradal, they brought their forces into the Throndhjem country, where they gathered together the whole people, free and unfree, and proceeded towards Veradal with so great a body of men that there was nobody in Norway at that time who had seen so large a force assembled. But the force, as it usually happens in so great a multitude, consisted of many different sorts of people. There were many lendermen, and a great many powerful bondes; but the great mass consisted of labourers and cottars. The chief strength of this army lay in the Throndhjem land, and it was the most warm in enmity and opposition to the king.

229. OF BISHOP SIGURD.

When King Canute had, as before related, laid all Norway under his power, he set Earl Hakon to manage it, and gave the earl a court-bishop, by name Sigurd, who was of Danish descent, and had been long with King Canute. This bishop was of a very hot temper, and particularly obstinate, and haughty in his speech; but supported King Canute all he could in conversation, and was a great enemy of King Olaf. He was now also in the bondes' army, spoke often before the people, and urged them much to insurrection against King Olaf.

230. BISHOP SIGURD'S SPEECH.

At a House-thing, at which a great many people were assembled, the bishop desired to be heard, and made the following speech: "Here are now assembled a great many men, so that probably there will never be opportunity in this poor country of seeing so great a native army; but it would be desirable if this strength and multitude could be a protection; for it will all be needed, if this Olaf does not give over bringing war and strife upon you. From his very earliest youth he has been accustomed to plunder and kill: for which purposes he drove widely around through all countries, until he turned at last against this, where he began to show hostilities against the men who were the best and most powerful; and even against King Canute, whom all are bound to serve according to their ability, and in whose scat-lands he set himself down. He did the same to Olaf the Swedish king. He drove the earls Svein and Hakon away from their heritages; and was even most tyrannical

towards his own connections, as he drove all the kings out of the Uplands: although, indeed, it was but just reward for having been false to their oaths of fealty to King Canute, and having followed this King Olaf in all the folly he could invent; so their friendship ended according to their deserts, by this king mutilating some of them, taking their kingdoms himself, and ruining every man in the country who had an honourable name. Ye know yourselves how he has treated the lendersmen, of whom many of the worthiest have been murdered, and many obliged to fly from their country; and how he has roamed far and wide through the land with robber-bands, burning and plundering houses, and killing people. Who is the man among us here of any consideration who has not some great injury from him to avenge? Now he has come hither with a foreign troop, consisting mostly of forest-men, vagabonds, and such marauders. Do ye think he will now be more merciful to you, when he is roaming about with such a bad crew, after committing devastations which all who followed him dissuaded him from? Therefore it is now my advice, that ye remember King Canute's words when he told you, if King Olaf attempted to return to the country ye should defend the liberty King Canute had promised you, and should oppose and drive away such a vile pack. Now the only thing to be done is to advance against them, and cast forth these malefactors to the wolves and eagles, leaving their corpses on the spot they cover, unless ye drag them aside to out-of-the-way corners in the woods or rocks. No man would be so imprudent as to remove them to churches, for they are all robbers and evil-doers." When he had ended his speech it was hailed with the loudest applause, and all unanimously agreed to act according to his recommendation.

231. OF THE LENDERMEN.

The lendersmen who had come together appointed meetings with each other, and consulted together how they should draw up their troops, and who should be their leader. Kalf Arnason said that Harek of Thjotta was best fitted to be the chief of this army, for he was descended from Harald Harfager's race. "The king also is particularly enraged against him on account of the murder of Grankel, and therefore he would be exposed to the severest fate if Olaf recovered the kingdom; and Harek withal is a man experienced in battles, and a man who does much for honour alone."

Harek replies, that the men are best suited for this who are in the flower of their age. "I am now," says he, "an old and decaying man, not able to do much in battle: besides, there is near relationship between me and King Olaf; and although he seems not to put great value upon that tie, it would not beseem me to go as leader of the hostilities against him, before any other in this meeting. On the other hand, thou, Thorer, art well suited to be our chief in this battle against King Olaf; and thou hast distinct grounds for being so, both because thou hast to avenge the death of thy relation, and also hast been driven by him as an outlaw from thy property. Thou hast also promised King Canute, as well as thy connections, to avenge the murder of thy relative Asbjorn; and dost thou suppose there ever will be a better opportunity than this of taking vengeance on Olaf for all these insults and injuries?"

Thorer replies thus to his speech: "I do not confide in myself so much as to raise the banner against King Olaf, or, as chief, to lead on this army; for the people of Thronthjem have the greatest part in this armament, and I know well their haughty spirit, and that they would not obey me, or any other Halogaland man, although I need not be reminded of my injuries to be roused to vengeance on King Olaf. I remember well my heavy loss when King Olaf slew four men, all distinguished both by birth and personal qualities; namely, my brother's son Asbjorn, my sister's sons Thorer and Grjotgard, and their father Olver; and it is my duty to take vengeance for each man of them. I will not conceal that I have selected eleven of my house-servants for that purpose, and of those who are the most daring; and I do not think we shall be behind others in exchanging blows with King Olaf, should opportunity be given."

232. KALF ARNASON'S SPEECH.

Then Kalf Arnason desired to speak. "It is highly necessary," says he, "that this business we have on hand do not turn out a mockery and child-work, now that an army is collected. Something else is needful, if we are to stand battle with King Olaf, than that each should shove the danger from himself; for we must recollect that although King Olaf has not many people compared to this army of ours, the leader of them is intrepid, and the whole body of them will be true to him, and obedient in the battle. But if we who should be the leaders of this army show any fear, and will not encourage the army and go at the head of it, it must happen that with the great body of our people the spirit will leave their hearts, and the next thing will be that each will seek his own safety. Although we have now a great force assembled, we shall find our destruction certain, when we meet King Olaf and his troops, if we, the chiefs of the people, are not confident in our cause, and have not the whole army confidently and bravely going along with us. If it cannot be so, we had better not risk a battle; and then it is easy to see that nothing would be left us but to shelter ourselves under King Olaf's mercy, however hard it might be, as then we would be less guilty than we now may appear to him to be. Yet I know there are men in his ranks who would secure my life and peace if I would seek it. Will ye now adopt my proposal—then shalt thou, friend Thorer, and thou, Harek, go under the banner which we will all of us raise up, and then follow. Let us all be speedy and determined in the resolution we have taken, and put ourselves so at the head of the bondes' army that they see no distrust in us; for then will the common man advance with spirit when we go merrily to work in placing the army in battle-order, and in encouraging the people to the strife."

When Kalf had ended they all concurred in what he proposed, and all would do what Kalf thought of advantage. All desired Kalf to be the leader of the army, and to give each what place in it he chose.

233. HOW THE LENDERMEN SET UP THEIR BANNERS.

Kalf Arnason then raised his banner, and drew up his house-servants along with Harek of Thjotta and his men. Thorer Hund, with his troop, was at the head of the order of battle in front of the banner; and on both sides of Thorer was a chosen body of bondes, all of them the most active and best armed in the forces. This part of the array was long and thick, and in it were drawn up the Thronthjem people and the Halogalanders. On the right wing was another array; and on the left of the main array were drawn up the men from Rogaland, Hordaland, the Fjord districts, and Sogn, and they had the third banner.

234. OF THORSTEIN KNARRARSMID.

There was a man called Thorstein Knarrarsmid, who was a merchant and master ship-carpenter, stout and strong, very passionate, and a great manslayer. He had been in enmity against King Olaf, who had taken from him a new and large merchant-vessel he had built, on account of some manslaughter-mulct, incurred in the course of his misdeeds, which he owed to the king. Thorstein, who was with the bondes' army, went forward in front of the line in which Thorer Hund stood, and said, "Here I will be, Thorer, in your ranks; for I think, if I and King Olaf meet, to be the first to strive a weapon at him, if I can get so near, to repay him for the robbery of the ship he took from me, which was the best that ever went on merchant voyage." Thorer and his men received Thorstein, and he went into their ranks.

235. OF THE PREPARATIONS OF THE BONDES.

When the bondes' men and array were drawn up the lendersmen addressed the men, and ordered them to take notice of the place to which each man belonged, under which banner each should be, who there were in front of the banner, who were his side-men, and that they should be brisk and quick in taking up their places in the array; for the army had still to go a long way, and the array might

be broken in the course of march. Then they encouraged the people; and Kalf invited all the men who had any injury to avenge on King Olaf to place themselves under the banner which was advancing against King Olaf's own banner. They should remember the distress he had brought upon them; and, he said, never was there a better opportunity to avenge their grievances, and to free themselves from the yoke and slavery he had imposed on them. "Let him," says he, "be held a useless coward who does not fight this day boldly; and they are not innocents who are opposed to you, but people who will not spare you if ye spare them."

Kalf's speech was received with loud applause, and shouts of encouragement were heard through the whole army.

236. OF THE KING'S AND THE BONDES' ARMIES.

Thereafter the bondes' army advanced to Stiklestad, where King Olaf was already with his people. Kalf and Harek went in front, at the head of the army under their banners. But the battle did not begin immediately on their meeting; for the bondes delayed the assault, because all their men were not come upon the plain, and they waited for those who came after them. Thorer Hund had come up with his troop the last, for he had to take care that the men did not go off behind when the battlecry was raised, or the armies were closing with each other; and therefore Kalf and Harek waited for Thorer. For the encouragement of their men in the battle the bondes had the field-cry—"Forward, forward, bondemen!" King Olaf also made no attack, for he waited for Dag and the people who followed him. At last the king saw Dag and his men approaching. It is said that the army of the bondes was not less on this day than a hundred times a hundred men. Sigvat the skald speaks thus of the numbers:—

I grieve to think the king had brought
Too small a force for what he sought:
He held his gold too fast to bring
The numbers that could make him king.
The foemen, more than two to one,
The victory by numbers won;
And this alone, as I've heard say,
Against King Olaf turned the day.

237. MEETING OF THE KING AND THE BONDES.

As the armies on both sides stood so near that people knew each other, the king said, "Why art thou here, Kalf, for we parted good friends south in More? It beseems thee ill to fight against us, or to throw a spear into our army; for here are four of thy brothers."

Kalf replied, "Many things come to pass differently from what may appear seemly. You parted from us so that it was necessary to seek peace with those who were behind in the country. Now each must remain where he stands; but if I might advise, we should be reconciled."

Then Fin, his brother, answered, "This is to be observed of Kalf, that when he speaks fairly he has it in his mind to do ill."

The king answered, "It may be, Kalf, that thou art inclined to reconciliation; but, methinks, the bondes do not appear so peaceful."

Then Thorgeir of Kviststad said, "You shall now have such peace as many formerly have received at your hands, and which you shall now pay for."

The king replies, "Thou hast no occasion to hasten so much to meet us; for fate has not decreed to thee to-day a victory over me, who raised thee to power and dignity from a mean station."

238. BEGINNING OF THE BATTLE OF STIKLESTAD.

Now came Thorer Hund, went forward in front of the banner with his troop, and called out, "Forward, forward, bondemen!" Thereupon the bondemen raised the war-cry, and shot their arrows and spears. The king's men raised also a war-shout; and that done, encouraged each other to advance, crying out, "Forward, forward, Christ-men! cross-men! king's men!" When the bondes who stood outermost on the wings heard it, they repeated the same cry; but when the other bondes heard them they thought these were king's

men, turned their arms against them, and they fought together, and many were slain before they knew each other. The weather was beautiful, and the sun shone clear; but when the battle began the heaven and the sun became red, and before the battle ended it became as dark as at night. King Olaf had drawn up his army upon a rising ground, and it rushed down from thence upon the bonde-army with such a fierce assault, that the bondes' array went before it; so that the breast of the king's array came to stand upon the ground on which the rear of the bondes' array had stood, and many of the bondes' army were on the way to fly, but the lendenmen and their house-men stood fast, and the battle became very severe. So says Sigvat:—

Thundered the ground beneath their tread,
As, iron-clad, thick-tramping, sped
The men-at-arms, in row and rank,
Past Stiklestad's sweet grassy bank.
The clank of steel, the bowstrings' twang,
The sounds of battle, loudly rang;
And bowman hurried on advancing,
Their bright helmets in the sunshine glancing.

The lendenmen urged their men, and forced them to advance. Sigvat speaks of this:—

Midst in their line their banner flies,
Thither the stoutest bonde hies:
But many a bonde thinks of home,
And many wish they ne'er had come.

Then the bonde-army pushed on from all quarters. They who stood in front hewed down with their swords; they who stood next thrust with their spears; and they who stood hindmost shot arrows, cast spears, or threw stones, hand-axes, or sharp stakes. Soon there was a great fall of men in the battle. Many were down on both sides. In the first onset fell Arnljot Gelline, Gauka-Thorer, and Afrafaste, with all their men, after each had killed a man or two, and some indeed more. Now the ranks in front of the king's banner began to be thinned, and the king ordered Thord to carry the banner forward, and the king himself followed it with the troop he had chosen to stand nearest to him in battle; and these were the best armed men in the field, and the most expert in the use of their weapons. Sigvat the skald tells of this:—

Loud was the battle-storm there,
Where the king's banner flamed in air.
The king beneath his banner stands,
And there the battle he commands.

Olaf came forth from behind the shield-bulwark, and put himself at the head of the army; and when the bondes looked him in the face they were frightened, and let their hands drop. So says Sigvat:—

I think I saw them shrink with fear
Who would not shrink from foeman's spear,
When Olaf's lion-eye was cast
On them, and called up all the past.
Clear as the serpent's eye—his look
No Thronhjenn man could stand, but shook
Beneath its glance, and skulked away,
Knowing his king, and cursed the day.

The combat became fierce, and the king went forward in the fray. So says Sigvat:—

When on they came in fierce array,
And round the king arose the fray,
With shield on arm brave Olaf stood,
Dyeing his sword in their best blood.
For vengeance on his Thronhjenn foes,
On their best men he dealt his blows;
He who knew well death's iron play,
To his deep vengeance gave full sway.

239. THORGEIR OF KVISTSTAD'S FALL.

King Olaf fought most desperately. He struck the lendenman before mentioned (Thorgeir of Kviststad) across the face, cut off the nose-piece of his helmet, and clove his head down below the eyes so that they almost fell out. When he fell the king said, "Was it not true, Thorgeir, what I told thee, that thou shouldst not be victor in our meeting?" At the same instant Thord stuck the banner-pole so fast in the earth that it remained standing. Thord had got his death-wound, and fell beneath the banner. There also fell

Thorfin Mun, and also Gissur Gullbrarskald, who was attacked by two men, of whom he killed one, but only wounded the other before he fell. So says Hofgardaref:—

Bold in the Iron-storm was he,
Firm and stout as forest tree,
The hero who, 'gainst two at once,
Made Odin's fire from sword-edge glance;
Dealing a death-blow to the one,
Known as a brave and generous man,
Wounding the other, ere he fell,—
His bloody sword his deeds showed well.

It happened then, as before related, that the sun, although the air was clear, withdrew from the sight, and it became dark. Of this Sigvat the skald speaks:—

No common wonder in the sky
Fell out that day—the sun on high,
And not a cloud to see around,
Shone not, nor warmed Norway's ground.
The day on which fell out this fight
Was marked by dismal dusky light,
This from the East I heard—the end
Of our great king it did portend.

At the same time Dag Hringson came up with his people, and began to put his men in array, and to set up his banner; but on account of the darkness the onset could not go on so briskly, for they could not see exactly whom they had before them. They turned, however, to that quarter where the men of Hordaland and Rogaland stood. Many of these circumstances took place at the same time, and some happened a little earlier, and some a little later.

240. KING OLAF'S FALL.

On the one side of Kalf Arnason stood his two relations, Olaf and Kalf, with many other brave and stout men. Kalf was a son of Arnfin Arnmodson, and a brother's son of Arne Arnmodson. On the other side of Kalf Arnason stood Thorer Hund. King Olaf hewed at Thorer Hund, and struck him across the shoulders; but the sword would not cut, and it was as if dust flew from his reindeer-skin coat. So says Sigvat:—

The king himself now proved the power
Of Fin-folk's craft in magic hour,
With magic song; for stroke of steel
Thor's reindeer coat would never feel,
Bewitched by them it turned the stroke
Of the king's sword,—a dust-like smoke
Rose from Thor's shoulders from the blow
Which the king though would end his foe.

Thorer struck at the king, and they exchanged some blows; but the king's sword would not cut where it met the reindeer skin, although Thorer was wounded in the hands. Sigvat sang thus of it:—

Some say that Thorer's not right bold;
Why never yet have I been told
Of one who did a bolder thing
Than to change blows with his true king.
Against his king his sword to wield,
Leaping across the shield on shield
Which fenced the king round in the fight,
Shows the dog's courage—brave, not bright.

The king said to Bjorn the marshal, "Do thou kill the dog on whom steel will not bite." Bjorn turned round the axe in his hands, and gave Thorer a blow with the hammer of it on the shoulder so hard that he tottered. The king at the same moment turned against Kalf and his relations, and gave Olaf his death-wound. Thorer Hund struck his spear right through the body of Marshal Bjorn, and killed him outright; and Thorer said, "It is thus we hunt the bear." Thorstein Knarrarsmid struck at King Olaf with his axe, and the blow hit his left leg above the knee. Fin Arnason instantly killed Thorstein. The king after the wound staggered towards a stone, threw down his sword, and prayed God to help him. Then Thorer Hund struck at him with his spear, and the stroke went in under his mail-coat and into his belly. Then Kalf struck at him on the left side of the neck. But all are not agreed upon Kalf having been the man who gave him the wound in the neck. These three wounds were King Olaf's death; and after the king's death the greater part of the forces which had advanced with him fell with the king. Bjarne Gullbrarskald sang these verses about Kalf Arnason:—

Warrior! who Olaf dared withstand,
Who against Olaf held the land,
Thou hast withstood the bravest, best,
Who e'er has gone to his long rest.
At Stiklestad thou wast the head;
With flying banners onwards led
Thy bonde troops, and still fought on,
Until he fell—the much-mourned one.

Sigvat also made these verses on Bjorn:—

The marshal Bjorn, too, I find,
A great example leaves behind,
How steady courage should stand proof,
Though other servants stand aloof.
To Russia first his steps he bent,
To serve his master still intent;
And now besides his king he fell,—
A noble death for skalds to tell.

241. BEGINNING OF DAG HRINGSON'S ATTACK.

Dag Hringson still kept up the battle, and made in the beginning so fierce an assault that the bondes gave way, and some betook themselves to flight. There a great number of the bondes fell, and these lendermen, Erlend of Gerde and Aslak of Finney; and the banner also which they had stood under was cut down. This onset was particularly hot, and was called Dag's storm. But now Kalf Arnason, Harek of Thjotta, and Thorer Hund turned against Dag, with the array which had followed them, and then Dag was overwhelmed with numbers; so he betook himself to flight with the men still left him. There was a valley through which the main body of the fugitives fled, and men lay scattered in heaps on both sides; and many were severely wounded, and many so fatigued that they were fit for nothing. The bondes pursued only a short way; for their leaders soon returned back to the field of battle, where they had their friends and relations to look after.

242. KING OLAF'S MIRACLE SHOWN TO THORER HUND.

Thorer Hund went to where King Olaf's body lay, took care of it, laid it straight out on the ground, and spread a cloak over it. He told since that when he wiped the blood from the face it was very beautiful; and there was red in the cheeks, as if he only slept, and even much clearer than when he was in life. The king's blood came on Thorer's hand, and ran up between his fingers to where he had been wounded, and the wound grew up so speedily that it did not require to be bound up. This circumstance was testified by Thorer himself when King Olaf's holiness came to be generally known among the people; and Thorer Hund was among the first of the king's powerful opponents who endeavoured to spread abroad the king's sanctity.

243. OF KALF ARNASON'S BROTHERS.

Kalf Arnason searched for his brothers who had fallen, and found Thorberg and Fin. It is related that Fin threw his dagger at him, and wanted to kill him, giving him hard words, and calling him a faithless villain, and a traitor to his king. Kalf did not regard it, but ordered Fin and Thorberg to be carried away from the field. When their wounds were examined they were found not to be deadly, and they had fallen from fatigue, and under the weight of their weapons. Thereafter Kalf tried to bring his brothers down to a ship, and went himself with them. As soon as he was gone the whole bonde-army, having their homes in the neighbourhood, went off also, excepting those who had friends or relations to look after, or the bodies of the slain to take care of. The wounded were taken home to the farms, so that every house was full of them; and tents were erected over some. But wonderful as was the number collected in the bonde-army, no less wonderful was the haste with which this vast body was dispersed when it was once free; and the cause of this was, that the most of the people gathered together from the country places were longing for their homes.

244. OF THE BONDES OF VERADAL.

The bondes who had their homes in Veradal went to the chiefs Harek and Thorer, and complained of their distress, saying, "The

fugitives who have escaped from the battle have proceeded up over the valley of Veradal, and are destroying our habitations, and there is no safety for us to travel home so long as they are in the valley. Go after them with war-force, and let no mother's son of them escape with life; for that is what they intended for us if they had got the upper hand in the battle, and the same they would do now if they met us hereafter, and had better luck than we. It may also be that they will linger in the valley if they have nothing to be frightened for, and then they would not proceed very gently in the inhabited country." The bondes made many words about this, urging the chiefs to advance directly, and kill those who had escaped. Now when the chiefs talked over this matter among themselves, they thought there was much truth in what the bondes said. They resolved, therefore, that Thorer Hund should undertake this expedition through Veradal, with 600 men of his own troops. Then, towards evening, he set out with his men; and Thorer continued his march without halt until he came in the night to Sula, where he heard the news that Dag Hringsson had come there in the evening, with many other flocks of the king's men, and had halted there until they took supper, but were afterwards gone up to the mountains. Then Thorer said he did not care to pursue them up through the mountains, and he returned down the valley again, and they did not kill many of them this time. The bondes then returned to their homes, and the following day Thorer, with his people, went to their ships. The part of the king's men who were still on their legs concealed themselves in the forests, and some got help from the people.

245. OF THE KING'S BROTHER, HARALD SIGURDSON.

Harald Sigurdson was severely wounded; but Ragnvald Brusason brought him to a bonde's the night after the battle, and the bonde took in Harald, and healed his wound in secret, and afterwards gave him his son to attend him. They went secretly over the mountains, and through the waste forests, and came out in Jamtaland. Harald Sigurdson was fifteen years old when King Olaf fell. In Jamtaland Harald found Ragnvald Brusason; and they went both east to King Jarisleif in Russia, as is related in the Saga of Harald Sigurdson.

246. OF THORMOD KOLBRUNARSKALD.

Thormod Kolbrunarskald was under King Olaf's banner in the battle; but when the king had fallen, the battle was raging so that of the king's men the one fell by the side of the other, and the most of those who stood on their legs were wounded. Thormod was also severely wounded, and retired, as all the others did, back from where there was most danger of life, and some even fled. Now when the onset began which is called Dag's storm, all of the king's men who were able to combat went there; but Thormod did not come into that combat, being unable to fight, both from his wound and from weariness, but he stood by the side of his comrade in the ranks, although he could do nothing. There he was struck by an arrow in the left side; but he broke off the shaft of the arrow, went out of the battle, and up towards the houses, where he came to a barn which was a large building. Thormod had his drawn sword in his hand; and as he went in a man met him, coming out, and said, "It is very bad there with howling and screaming; and a great shame it is that brisk young fellows cannot bear their wounds: it may be that the king's men have done bravely to-day, but they certainly bear their wounds very ill."

Thormod asks. "What is thy name?"

He called himself Kimbe.

Thormod: "Wast thou in the battle, too?"

"I was with the bondes, which was the best side," says he.

"And art thou wounded any way?" says Thormod.

"A little," said Kimbe. "And hast thou been in the battle too?"

Thormod replied, "I was with them who had the best."

"Art thou wounded?" says Kimbe.

"Not much to signify," replies Thormod.

As Kimbe saw that Thormod had a gold ring on his arm, he said, "Thou art certainly a king's man. Give me thy gold ring, and

I will hide thee. The bondes will kill thee if thou fallest in their way."

Thormod says, "Take the ring if thou canst get it: I have lost that which is more worth."

Kimbe stretched out his hand, and wanted to take the ring; but Thormod, swinging his sword, cut off his hand; and it is related that Kimbe behaved himself no better under his wound than those he had been blaming just before. Kimbe went off, and Thormod sat down in the barn, and listened to what people were saying. The conversation was mostly about what each had seen in the battle, and about the valour of the combatants. Some praised most King Olaf's courage, and some named others who stood nowise behind him in bravery. Then Thormod sang these verses:—

Olaf was brave beyond all doubt,—
At Stiklestad was none so stout;
Spattered with blood, the king, unsparing,
Cheered on his men with deed and daring.
But I have heard that some were there
Who in the fight themselves would spare;
Though, in the arrow-storm, the most
Had perils quite enough to boast.

247. THORMOD'S DEATH.

Thormod went out, and entered into a chamber apart, in which there were many wounded men, and with them a woman binding their wounds. There was fire upon the floor, at which she warmed water to wash and clean their wounds. Thormod sat himself down beside the door, and one came in, and another went out, of those who were busy about the wounded men. One of them turned to Thormod, looked at him, and said, "Why art thou so dead-pale? Art thou wounded? Why dost thou not call for the help of the wound-healers?" Thormod then sang these verses:—

I am not blooming, and the fair
And slender girl loves to care
For blooming youths—few care for me;
With Fenja's meal I cannot fee.
This is the reason why I feel
The slash and thrust of Danish steel;
And pale and faint, and bent with pain,
Return from yonder battle-plain.

Then Thormod stood up and went in towards the fire, and stood there awhile. The young woman said to him, "Go out, man, and bring in some of the split firewood which lies close beside the door." He went out and brought in an armful of wood, which he threw down upon the floor. Then the nurse-girl looked him in the face, and said, "Dreadfully pale is this man—why art thou so?" Then Thormod sang:—

Thou wonderest, sweet sprig, at me,
A man so hideous to see:
Deep wounds but rarely mend the face,
The crippling blow gives little grace.
The arrow-drift o'ertook me, girl,—
A fine-ground arrow in the whirl
Went through me, and I feel the dart
Sits, lovely girl, too near my heart.

The girl said, "Let me see thy wound, and I will bind it." Thereupon Thormod sat down, cast off his clothes, and the girl saw his wounds, and examined that which was in his side, and felt that a piece of iron was in it, but could not find where the iron had gone in. In a stone pot she had stirred together leeks and other herbs, and boiled them, and gave the wounded men of it to eat, by which she discovered if the wounds had penetrated into the belly; for if the wound had gone so deep, it would smell of leek. She brought some of this now to Thormod, and told him to eat of it. He replied, "Take it away, I have no appetite for my broth." Then she took a large pair of tongs, and tried to pull out the iron; but it sat too fast, and would in no way come, and as the wound was swelled, little of it stood out to lay hold of. Now said Thormod, "Cut so deep in that thou canst get at the iron with the tongs, and give me the tongs and let me pull." She did as he said. Then Thormod took a gold ring from his hand, gave it to the nurse-woman, and told her to do with it what she liked. "It is a good man's gift," said he: "King Olaf gave me the ring this morning." Then Thormod took the tongs, and pulled the iron out; but on the iron there was a hook, at which there hung some morsels of flesh from the heart,—some white, some red. When he saw that, he said, "The king has

fed us well. I am fat, even at the heart-roots;" and so saying he leant back, and was dead. And with this ends what we have to say about Thormod.

248. OF SOME CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE BATTLE.

King Olaf fell on Wednesday, the 29th of July (A.D. 1030). It was near mid-day when the two armies met, and the battle began before half-past one, and before three the king fell. The darkness continued from about half-past one to three also. Sigvat the skald speaks thus of the result of the battle:—

The loss was great to England's foes,
When their chief fell beneath the blows
By his own thoughtless people given,—
When the king's shield in two was riven.
The people's sovereign took the field,
The people clove the sovereign's shield.
Of all the chiefs that bloody day,
Dag only came out of the fray.

And he composed these:—

Such mighty bonde-power, I ween,
With chiefs or rulers ne'er was seen.
It was the people's mighty power
That struck the king that fatal hour.
When such a king, in such a strife,
By his own people lost his life,
Full many a gallant man must feel
The death-wound from the people's steel.

The bondes did not spoil the slain upon the field of battle, for immediately after the battle there came upon many of them who had been against the king a kind of dread as it were; yet they held by their evil inclination, for they resolved among themselves that all who had fallen with the king should not receive the interment which belongs to good men, but reckoned them all robbers and outlaws. But the men who had power, and had relations on the field, cared little for this, but removed their remains to the churches, and took care of their burial.

249. A MIRACLE ON A BLIND MAN.

Thorgils Halmason and his son Grim went to the field of battle towards evening when it was dusk, took King Olaf's corpse up, and bore it to a little empty houseman's hut which stood on the other side of their farm. They had light and water with them. Then they took the clothes off the body, swathed it in a linen cloth, laid it down in the house, and concealed it under some firewood so that nobody could see it, even if people came into the hut. Thereafter they went home again to the farmhouse. A great many beggars and poor people had followed both armies, who begged for meat; and the evening after the battle many remained there, and sought lodging round about in all the houses, great or small. It is told of a blind man who was poor, that a boy attended him and led him. They went out around the farm to seek a lodging, and came to the same empty house, of which the door was so low that they had almost to creep in. Now when the blind man had come in, he fumbled about the floor seeking a place where he could lay himself down. He had a hat on his head, which fell down over his face when he stooped down. He felt with his hands that there was moisture on the floor, and he put up his wet hand to raise his hat, and in doing so put his fingers on his eyes. There came immediately such an itching in his eyelids, that he wiped the water with his fingers from his eyes, and went out of the hut, saying nobody could lie there, it was so wet. When he came out of the hut he could distinguish his hands, and all that was near him, as far as things can be distinguished by sight in the darkness of light; and he went immediately to the farm-house into the room, and told all the people he had got his sight again, and could see everything, although many knew he had been blind for a long time, for he had been there, before, going about among the houses of the neighbourhood. He said he first got his sight when he was coming out of a little ruinous hut which was all wet inside. "I groped in the water," said he, "and rubbed my eyes with my wet hands." He told where the hut stood. The people who heard him wondered much at this event, and spoke among themselves of what it could be that produced it: but Thorgils the peasant and his son Grim thought

they knew how this came to pass; and as they were much afraid the king's enemies might go there and search the hut, they went and took the body out of it, and removed it to a garden, where they concealed it, and then returned to the farm, and slept there all night.

250. OF THORER HUND.

The fifth day (Thursday), Thorer Hund came down the valley of Veradal to Stiklestad; and many people, both chiefs and bondes, accompanied him. The field of battle was still being cleared, and people were carrying away the bodies of their friends and relations, and were giving the necessary help to such of the wounded as they wished to save; but many had died since the battle. Thorer Hund went to where the king had fallen, and searched for his body; but not finding it, he inquired if any one could tell him what had become of the corpse, but nobody could tell him where it was. Then he asked the bonde Thorgils, who said, "I was not in the battle, and knew little of what took place there; but many reports are abroad, and among others that King Olaf has been seen in the night up at Staf, and a troop of people with him: but if he fell in the battle, your men must have concealed him in some hole, or under some stone-heap." Now although Thorer Hund knew for certain that the king had fallen, many allowed themselves to believe, and to spread abroad the report, that the king had escaped from the battle, and would in a short time come again upon them with an army. Then Thorer went to his ships, and sailed down the fjord, and the bonde-army dispersed, carrying with them all the wounded men who could bear to be removed.

251. OF KING OLAF'S BODY.

Thorgils Halmason and his son Grim had King Olaf's body, and were anxious about preserving it from falling into the hands of the king's enemies, and being ill-treated; for they heard the bondes speaking about burning it, or sinking it in the sea. The father and son had seen a clear light burning at night over the spot on the battlefield where King Olaf's body lay, and since, while they concealed it, they had always seen at night a light burning over the corpse; therefore they were afraid the king's enemies might seek the body where this signal was visible. They hastened, therefore, to take the body to a place where it would be safe. Thorgils and his son accordingly made a coffin, which they adorned as well as they could, and laid the king's body in it; and afterwards made another coffin in which they laid stones and straw, about as much as the weight of a man, and carefully closed the coffins. As soon as the whole bonde-army had left Stiklestad, Thorgils and his son made themselves ready, got a large rowing-boat, and took with them seven or eight men, who were all Thorgil's relations or friends, and privately took the coffin with the king's body down to the boat, and set it under the foot-boards. They had also with them the coffin containing the stones, and placed it in the boat where all could see it; and then went down the fjord with a good opportunity of wind and weather, and arrived in the dusk of the evening at Nidaros, where they brought up at the king's pier. Then Thorgils sent some of his men up to the town to Bishop Sigurd, to say that they were come with the king's body. As soon as the bishop heard this news, he sent his men down to the pier, and they took a small rowing-boat, came alongside of Thorgil's ship, and demanded the king's body. Thorgils and his people then took the coffin which stood in view, and bore it into the boat; and the bishop's men rowed out into the fjord, and sank the coffin in the sea. It was now quite dark. Thorgils and his people now rowed up into the river past the town, and landed at a place called Saurhlid, above the town. Then they carried the king's body to an empty house standing at a distance from other houses, and watched over it for the night, while Thorgils went down to the town, where he spoke with some of the best friends of King Olaf, and asked them if they would take charge of the king's body; but none of them dared to do so. Then Thorgils and his men went with the body higher up the river, buried it in a sand-hill on the banks, and levelled all around it so that no one could observe that people had been at work there. They were ready with all this before break of day, when they returned to their vessel, went immediately out of the

river, and proceeded on their way home to Stiklestad.

252. OF THE BEGINNING OF KING SVEIN ALFIFASON'S GOVERNMENT.

Svein, a son of King Canute, and of Alfifa, a daughter of Earl Alfrin, had been appointed to govern Jomsborg in Vindland. There came a message to him from his father King Canute, that he should come to Denmark; and likewise that afterwards he should proceed to Norway, and take that kingdom under his charge, and assume, at the same time, the title of king of Norway. Svein repaired to Denmark, and took many people with him from thence, and also Earl Harald and many other people of consequence attended him. Thorarin Loftunga speaks of this in the song he composed about King Svein, called the "Glelogn Song":—

'Tis told by fame,
How grandly came
The Danes to tend
Their young king Svein.
Grandest was he,
That all could see;
Then, one by one,
Each following man
More splendour wore
Than him before.

Then Svein proceeded to Norway, and his mother Alfifa was with him; and he was taken to be king at every Law-thing in the country. He had already come as far as Viken at the time the battle was fought at Stiklestad, and King Olaf fell. Svein continued his journey until he came north, in autumn, to the Thronthjem country; and there, as elsewhere, he was received as king.

253. OF KING SVEIN'S LAWS.

King Svein introduced new laws in many respects into the country, partly after those which were in Denmark, and in part much more severe. No man must leave the country without the king's permission; or if he did, his property fell to the king. Whoever killed a man outright, should forfeit all his land and movables. If any one was banished the country, and all heritage fell to him, the king took his inheritance. At Yule every man should pay the king a meal of malt from every harvest steading, and a leg of a three-year old ox, which was called a friendly gift, together with a span of butter; and every house-wife a rock full of unspun lint, as thick as one could span with the longest fingers of the hand. The bondes were bound to build all the houses the king required upon his farms. Of every seven males one should be taken for the service of war, and reckoning from the fifth year of age; and the outfit of ships should be reckoned in the same proportion. Every man who rowed upon the sea to fish should pay the king five fish as a tax, for the land defence, wherever he might come from. Every ship that went out of the country should have stowage reserved open for the king in the middle of the ship. Every man, foreigner or native, who went to Iceland, should pay a tax to the king. And to all this was added, that Danes should enjoy so much consideration in Norway, that one witness of them should invalidate ten of Northmen.

When these laws were promulgated the minds of the people were instantly raised against them, and murmurs were heard among them. They who had not taken part against King Olaf said, "Now take your reward and friendship from the Canute race, ye men of the interior Thronthjem who fought against King Olaf, and deprived him of his kingdom. Ye were promised peace and justice, and now ye have got oppression and slavery for your great treachery and crime." Nor was it very easy to contradict them, as all men saw how miserable the change had been. But people had not the boldness to make an insurrection against King Svein, principally because many had given King Canute their sons or other near relations as hostages; and also because no one appeared as leader of an insurrection. They very soon, however, complained of King Svein; and his mother Alfifa got much of the blame of all that was against their desire. Then the truth, with regard to Olaf, became evident to many.

254. OF KING OLAF'S SANCTITY.

This winter (A.D. 1031) many in the Thronthjem land began to declare that Olaf was in reality a holy man, and his sanctity was confirmed by many miracles. Many began to make promises and prayers to King Olaf in the matters in which they thought they required help, and many found great benefit from these invocations. Some in respect of health, others of a journey, or other circumstances in which such help seemed needful.

255. OF EINAR TAMBASKELFER.

Einar Tambaskelfer was come home from England to his farm, and had the fiefs which King Canute had given him when they met in Thronthjem, and which were almost an earldom. Einar had not been in the strife against King Olaf, and congratulated himself upon it. He remembered that King Canute had promised him the earldom over Norway, and at the same time remembered that King Canute had not kept his promise. He was accordingly the first great person who looked upon King Olaf as a saint.

256. OF THE SONS OF ARNE.

Fin Arnason remained but a short time at Eggja with his brother Kalf; for he was in the highest degree ill-pleased that Kalf had been in the battle against King Olaf, and always made his brother the bitterest reproaches on this account. Thorberg Arnason was much more temperate in his discourse than Fin; but yet he hastened away, and went home to his farm. Kalf gave the two brothers a good long-ship, with full rigging and other necessities, and a good retinue. Therefore they went home to their farms, and sat quietly at home. Arne Arnason lay long ill of his wounds, but got well at last without injury of any limb, and in winter he proceeded south to his farm. All the brothers made their peace with King Svein, and sat themselves quietly down in their homes.

257. BISHOP SIGURD'S FLIGHT.

The summer after (A.D. 1031) there was much talk about King Olaf's sanctity, and there was a great alteration in the expressions of all people concerning him. There were many who now believed that King Olaf must be a saint, even among those who had persecuted him with the greatest animosity, and would never in their conversation allow truth or justice in his favour. People began then to turn their reproaches against the men who had principally excited opposition to the king; and on this account Bishop Sigurd in particular was accused. He got so many enemies, that he found it most advisable to go over to England to King Canute. Then the Thronthjem people sent men with a verbal message to the Uplands, to Bishop Grimkel, desiring him to come north to Thronthjem. King Olaf had sent Bishop Grimkel back to Norway when he went east into Russia, and since that time Grimkel had been in the Uplands. When the message came to the bishop he made ready to go, and it contributed much to this journey that the bishop considered it as true what was told of King Olaf's miracles and sanctity.

258. KING OLAF THE SAINT'S REMAINS DISINTERRED.

Bishop Grimkel went to Einar Tambaskelfer, who received him joyfully. They talked over many things, and, among others, of the important events which had taken place in the country; and concerning these they were perfectly agreed. Then the bishop proceeded to the town (Nidaros), and was well received by all the community. He inquired particularly concerning the miracles of King Olaf that were reported, and received satisfactory accounts of them. Thereupon the bishop sent a verbal message to Stiklestad to Thorgils and his son Grim, inviting them to come to the town to him. They did not decline the invitation, but set out on the road immediately, and came to the town and to the bishop. They related to him all the signs that had presented themselves to them, and also where they had deposited the king's body. The bishop sent a message to Einar Tambaskelfer, who came to the town. Then the bishop and Einar had an audience of the king and Alfifa, in which they asked the king's leave to have King Olaf's body taken up out of the earth. The king gave his permission, and told the bishop

to do as he pleased in the matter. At that time there were a great many people in the town. The bishop, Einar, and some men with them, went to the place where the king's body was buried, and had the place dug; but the coffin had already raised itself almost to the surface of the earth. It was then the opinion of many that the bishop should proceed to have the king buried in the earth at Clement's church; and it was so done. Twelve months and five days (Aug. 3, A.D. 1031), after King Olaf's death his holy remains were dug up, and the coffin had raised itself almost entirely to the surface of the earth; and the coffin appeared quite new, as if it had but lately been made. When Bishop Grimkel came to King Olaf's opened coffin, there was a delightful and fresh smell. Thereupon the bishop uncovered the king's face, and his appearance was in no respect altered, and his cheeks were as red as if he had but just fallen asleep. The men who had seen King Olaf when he fell remarked, also, that his hair and nails had grown as much as if he had lived on the earth all the time that had passed since his fall. Thereupon King Svein, and all the chiefs who were at the place, went out to see King Olaf's body. Then said Alfifa, "People buried in sand rot very slowly, and it would not have been so if he had been buried in earth." Afterwards the bishop took scissors, clipped the king's hair, and arranged his beard; for he had had a long beard, according to the fashion of that time. Then said the bishop to the king and Alfifa, "Now the king's hair and beard are such as when he gave up the ghost, and it has grown as much as ye see has been cut off." Alfifa answers, "I will believe in the sanctity of his hair, if it will not burn in the fire; but I have often seen men's hair whole and undamaged after lying longer in the earth than this man's." Then the bishop had live coals put into a pan, blessed it, cast incense upon it, and then laid King Olaf's hair on the fire. When all the incense was burnt the bishop took the hair out of the fire, and showed the king and the other chiefs that it was not consumed. Now Alfifa asked that the hair should be laid upon unconsecrated fire; but Einar Tambaskelfer told her to be silent, and gave her many severe reproaches for her unbelief. After the bishop's recognition, with the king's approbation and the decision of the Thing, it was determined that King Olaf should be considered a man truly holy; whereupon his body was transported into Clement's church, and a place was prepared for it near the high altar. The coffin was covered with costly cloth, and stood under a gold embroidered tent. Many kinds of miracles were soon wrought by King Olaf's holy remains.

259. OF KING OLAF'S MIRACLES.

In the sand-hill where King Olaf's body had lain on the ground a beautiful spring of water came up and many human ailments and infirmities were cured by its waters. Things were put in order around it, and the water ever since has been carefully preserved. There was first a chapel built, and an altar consecrated, where the king's body had lain; but now Christ's church stands upon the spot. Archbishop Eysteinn had a high altar raised upon the spot where the king's grave had been, when he erected the great temple which now stands there; and it is the same spot on which the altar of the old Christ church had stood. It is said that Olaf's church stands on the spot on which the empty house had stood in which King Olaf's body had been laid for the night. The place over which the holy remains of King Olaf were carried up from the vessel is now called Olaf's Road, and is now in the middle of the town. The bishop adorned King Olaf's holy remains, and cut his nails and hair; for both grew as if he had still been alive. So says Sigvat the skald:—

I lie not, when I say the king
Seemed as alive in every thing;
His nails, his yellow hair still growing,
And round his ruddy cheek still flowing,
As when, to please the Russian queen,
His yellow locks adorned were seen;
Or to the blind he cured he gave
A tress, their precious sight to save.

Thorarin Loftunga also composed a song upon Svein Alfifason, called the "Glelogn Song", in which are these verses:—

Svein, king of all,
In Olaf's hall
Now sits on high;

And Olaf's eye
Looks down from heaven,
Where it is given
To him to dwell:
Or here in cell,
As heavenly saint,
To heal men's plaint,
May our gold-giver
Live here for ever!
"King Olaf there
To hold a share
On earth prepared,
Nor labour spared
A seat to win
From heaven's great King;
Which he has won
Next God's own Son.
"His holy form,
Untouched by worm,
Lies at this day
Where good men pray,
And nails and hair
Grow fresh and fair;
His cheek is red,
His flesh not dead.
"Around his bier,
Good people hear
The small bells ring
Over the king,
Or great bell toll;
And living soul
Not one can tell
Who tolls the bell.
"Tapers up there,
(Which Christ holds dear),
By day and night
The altar light:
Olaf did so,
And all men know
In heaven he
From sin sits free.
"And crowds do come,
The deaf and dumb,
Cripple and blind,
Sick of all kind,
Cured to be
On bended knee;
And off the ground
Rise whole and sound.
"To Olaf pray
To eke thy day,
To save thy land
From spoiler's hand.
God's man is he
To deal to thee
Good crops and peace;
Let not prayer cease.
"Book-prayers prevail,
If, nail for nail,
Thou tellest on,
Forgetting none.

Thorarin Loftunga was himself with King Svein, and heard these great testimonials of King Olaf's holiness, that people, by the heavenly power, could hear a sound over his holy remains as if bells were ringing, and that candles were lighted of themselves upon the altar as by a heavenly fire. But when Thorarin says that a multitude of lame, and blind, and other sick, who came to the holy Olaf, went back cured, he means nothing more than that there were a vast number of persons who at the beginning of King Olaf's miraculous working regained their health. King Olaf's greatest miracles are clearly written down, although they occurred somewhat later.

260. OF KING OLAF'S AGE AND REIGN.

It is reckoned by those who have kept an exact account, that Olaf the Saint was king of Norway for fifteen years from the time Earl Svein left the country; but he had received the title of king from the people of the Uplands the winter before. Sigvat the skald tells this:—

For fifteen winters o'er the land
King Olaf held the chief command,
Before he fell up in the North:
His fall made known to us his worth.
No worthier prince before his day
In our North land e'er held the sway,
Too short he held it for our good;
All men wish now that he had stood.

Saint Olaf was thirty-five years old when he fell, according to what Are Frode the priest says, and he had been in twenty pitched battles. So says Sigvat the skald:—

Some leaders trust in God—some not;
Even so their men; but well I wot
God-fearing Olaf fought and won
Twenty pitched battles, one by one,
And always placed upon his right
His Christian men in a hard fight.
May God be merciful, I pray,
To him—for he ne'er shunned his fray.

We have now related a part of King Olaf's story, namely, the events which took place while he ruled over Norway; also his death, and how his holiness was manifested. Now shall we not neglect to mention what it was that most advanced his honour. This was his miracles; but these will come to be treated of afterwards in this book.

261. OF THE THRONDHJEM PEOPLE.

King Svein, the son of Canute the Great, ruled over Norway for some years; but was a child both in age and understanding. His mother Alfifa had most sway in the country; and the people of the country were her great enemies, both then and ever since. Danish people had a great superiority given them within the country, to the great dissatisfaction of the people; and when conversation turned that way, the people of the rest of Norway accused the Throndhjem people of having principally occasioned King Olaf the Holy's fall, and also that the men of Norway were subject, through them, to the ill government by which oppression and slavery had come upon all the people, both great and small; indeed upon the whole community. They insisted that it was the duty of the Throndhjem people to attempt opposition and insurrection, and thus relieve the country from such tyranny; and, in the opinion of the common people, Throndhjem was also the chief seat of the strength of Norway at that time, both on account of the chiefs and of the population of that quarter. When the Throndhjem people heard these remarks of their countrymen, they could not deny that there was much truth in them, and that in depriving King Olaf of life and land they had committed a great crime, and at the same time the misdeed had been ill paid. The chiefs began to hold consultations and conferences with each other, and the leader of these was Einar Tambaskelfer. It was likewise the case with Kalf Arnason, who began to find into what errors he had been drawn by King Canute's persuasion. All the promises which King Canute had made to Kalf had been broken; for he had promised him the earldom and the highest authority in Norway; and although Kalf had been the leader in the battle against King Olaf, and had deprived him of his life and kingdom, Kalf had not got any higher dignity than he had before. He felt that he had been deceived, and therefore messages passed between the brothers Kalf, Fin, Thorberg, and Arne, and they renewed their family friendship.

262. OF KING SVEIN'S LEVY.

When King Svein had been three years in Norway (A.D. 1031-33), the news was received that a force was assembled in the western countries, under a chief who called himself Trygve, and gave out that he was a son of Olaf Trygvason and Queen Gyda of England. Now when King Svein heard that foreign troops had come to the country, he ordered out the people on a levy in the north, and the most of the lenders hastened to him; but Einar Tambaskelfer remained at home, and would not go out with King Svein. When King Svein's order came to Kalf Arnason at Eggja, that he should go out on a levy with King Svein, he took a twenty-benched ship which he owned, went on board with his house-servants, and in all haste proceeded out of the fjord, without waiting for King Svein, sailed southwards to More, and continued his voyage south until he came to Giske to his brother Thorberg. Then all the brothers, the sons of Arne, held a meeting, and consulted with each other. After this Kalf returned to the north again; but when he came to Frekeysund, King Svein was lying in the sound before him. When Kalf came rowing from the south into the sound they hailed each other, and the king's men ordered Kalf to bring up with his vessel,

and follow the king for the defence of the country. Kalf replies, "I have done enough, if not too much, when I fought against my own countrymen to increase the power of the Canute family." Thereupon Kalf rowed away to the north until he came home to Eggja. None of these Arnasons appeared at this levy to accompany the king. He steered with his fleet southwards along the land; but as he could not hear the least news of any fleet having come from the west, he steered south to Rogaland, and all the way to Agder; for many guessed that Trygve would first make his attempt on Viken, because his forefathers had been there, and had most of their strength from that quarter, and he had himself great strength by family connection there.

263. KING TRYGVE OLAFSON'S FALL.

When Trygve came from the west he landed first on the coast of Hordaland, and when he heard King Svein had gone south he went the same way to Rogaland. As soon as Svein got the intelligence that Trygve had come from the west he returned, and steered north with his fleet; and both fleets met within Bokn in Soknarsund, not far from the place where Erling Skjalgson fell. The battle, which took place on a Sunday, was great and severe. People tell that Trygve threw spears with both hands at once. "So my father," said he, "taught me to celebrate mass." His enemies had said that he was the son of a priest; but the praise must be allowed him that he showed himself more like a son of King Olaf Trygvason, for this Trygve was a slaughtering man. In this battle King Trygve fell, and many of his men with him; but some fled, and some received quarter and their lives. It is thus related in the ballad of Trygve:—

Trygve comes from the northern coast,
King Svein turns round with all his host;
To meet and fight, they both prepare,
And where they met grim death was there.
From the sharp strife I was not far,—
I heard the din and the clang of war;
And the Hordaland men at last gave way,
And their leader fell, and they lost the day.

This battle is also told of in the ballad about King Svein, thus:—

My girl! it was a Sunday morn,
And many a man ne'er saw its eve,
Though ale and leeks by old wives borne
The bruised and wounded did relieve.
'Twas Sunday morn, when Svein calls out,
'Stem to stem your vessels bind!'
The raven a mid-day feast smells out,
And he comes croaking up the wind.

After this battle King Svein ruled the country for some time, and there was peace in the land. The winter after it (A.D. 1034) he passed in the south parts of the country.

264. OF THE COUNSELS OF EINAR TAMBASKELFER AND KALF ARNASON.

Einar Tambaskelfer and Kalf Arnason had this winter meetings and consultations between themselves in the merchant town. Then there came a messenger from King Canute to Kalf Arnason, with a message to send him three dozen axes, which must be chosen and good. Kalf replies, "I will send no axes to King Canute. Tell him I will bring his son Svein so many, that he shall not think he is in want of any."

265. OF EINAR TAMBASKELFER AND KALF ARNASON'S JOURNEY.

Early in spring (A.D. 1034) Einar Tambaskelfer and Kalf Arnason made themselves ready for a journey, with a great retinue of the best and most select men that could be found in the Throndhjem country. They went in spring eastward over the ridge of the country to Jamtaland, from thence to Helsingjaland, and came to Svithjod, where they procured ships, with which in summer they proceeded east to Russia, and came in autumn to Ladoga. They sent men up to Novgorod to King Jarisleif, with the errand that they offered Magnus, the son of King Olaf the Saint, to take him with them, follow him to Norway, and give him assistance

to attain his father's heritage and be made king over the country. When this message came to King Jarisleif he held a consultation with the queen and some chiefs, and they all resolved unanimously to send a message to the Northmen, and ask them to come to King Jarisleif and Magnus; for which journey safe conduct was given them. When they came to Novgorod it was settled among them that the Northmen who had come there should become Magnus's men, and be his subjects; and to this Kalf and the other men who had been against King Olaf at Stiklestad were solemnly bound by oath. On the other hand, King Magnus promised them, under oath, secure peace and full reconciliation; and that he would be true and faithful to them all when he got the dominions and kingdom of Norway. He was to become Kalf Arnason's foster-son; and Kalf should be bound to do all that Magnus might think necessary for extending his dominion, and making it more independent than formerly.

SAGA OF MAGNUS THE GOOD.

1. MAGNUS OLAFSON'S JOURNEY FROM THE WEST.

After Yule Magnus Olafson began his journey from the East from Novgorod to Ladoga, where he rigged out his ships as soon as the ice was loosened in spring (A.D. 1035). Arnor, the earls' skald, tells of this in the poem on Magnus:—

It is no loose report that he,
Who will command on land and sea,
In blood will make his foeman feel
Olaf's sword Hneiter's sharp blue steel.
This generous youth, who scatters gold,
Norway's brave son, but ten years old,
Is rigging ships in Russia's lake,
His crown, with friend's support, to take.

In spring Magnus sailed from the East to Svithjod. So says Arnor:—

The young sword-stainer called a Thing,
Where all his men should meet their king;
Heroes who find the eagle food
Before their lord in arms stood.
And now the curved plank of the bow
Cleaves the blue sea; the ocean-plough
By grey winds driven across the main,
Reaches Sigtuna's grassy plain.

Here it is related that when King Magnus and his fellow-travellers sailed from the East to Svithjod, they brought up at Sigtuna. Emund Olafson was then king in Svithjod. Queen Astrid, who had been married to King Olaf the Saint, was also there. She received very gladly and well her stepson King Magnus, and summoned immediately a numerous Thing of Swedes at a place called Hangtar. At the Thing Queen Astrid spoke these words: "Here is come to us a son of Olaf the Saint, called Magnus, who intends to make an expedition to Norway to seek his father's heritage. It is my great duty to give him aid towards this expedition; for he is my stepson, as is well known to all, both Swedes and Norwegians. Neither shall he want men or money, in so far as I can procure them or have influence, in order that his strength may be as great as possible; and all the men who will support this cause of his shall have my fullest friendship; and I would have it known that I intend myself to go with him on this attempt, that all may see I will spare nothing that is in my power to help him." She spoke long and cleverly in this strain; but when she had ended many replied thus: "The Swedes made no honourable progress in Norway when they followed King Olaf his father, and now no better success is to be expected, as this man is but in years of boyhood; and therefore we have little inclination for this expedition." Astrid replies, "All men who wish to be thought of true courage must not be deterred by such considerations. If any have lost connections at the side of King Olaf, or been themselves wounded, now is the time to show a man's heart and courage, and go to Norway to take vengeance." Astrid succeeded so far with words and encouragement that many men determined to go with her, and follow King Magnus to Norway. Sigvat the skald speaks of this:—

Now Astrid, Olaf's widowed Queen,—
She who so many a change had seen,—

Took all the gifts of happier days,
Jewels and rings, all she could raise,
And at a Thing at Hangrar, where
The Swedes were numerous, did declare
What Olaf's son proposed to do,
And brought her gifts—their pay—in view.
"And with the Swedes no wiser plan,
To bring out every brave bold man,
Could have been found, had Magnus been
The son himself of the good queen.
With help of Christ, she hoped to bring
Magnus to be the land's sole king,
As Harald was, who in his day
Obtained o'er all the upper sway.
"And glad are we so well she sped,—
The people's friend is now their head;
And good King Magnus always shows
How much he to Queen Astrid owes.
Such stepmothers as this good queen
In truth are very rarely seen;
And to this noble woman's praise
The skald with joy his song will raise.

Thiodolf the skald also says in his song of Magnus:—

When thy brave ship left the land,
The bending yard could scarce withstand
The fury of the whistling gale,
That split thy many-coloured sail;
And many a stout ship, tempest-tost,
Was in that howling storm lost
That brought them safe to Sigtuna's shore,
Far from the sound of ocean's roar.

2. MAGNUS'S EXPEDITION FROM SVITHJOD.

King Magnus set out on his journey from Sigtuna with a great force, which he had gathered in Svithjod. They proceeded through Svithjod on foot to Helsingjaland. So says Arnor, the earl's skald:—

And many a dark-red Swedish shield
Marched with thee from the Swedish field.
The country people crowded in,
To help Saint Olaf's son to win;
And chosen men by thee were led,
Men who have stained the wolf's tongue red.
Each milk-white shield and polished spear
Came to a splendid gathering there.

Magnus Olafson went from the East through Jamtaland over the keel-ridge of the country and came down upon the Throndhjem district, where all men welcomed the king with joy. But no sooner did the men of King Svein, the son of Alfifa, hear that King Magnus Olafson was come to the country, than they fled on all sides and concealed themselves, so that no opposition was made to King Magnus; for King Svein was in the south part of the country. So says Arnor, the earls' skald:—

He who the eagle's talons stains
Rushed from the East on Throndhjem's plains;
The terror of his plumed helm
Drove his pale foemen from the realm.
The lightning of thy eye so near,
Great king! thy foemen could not bear,
Scattered they fled—their only care
If thou their wretched lives wilt spare.

3. MAGNUS MADE KING.

Magnus Olafson advanced to the town (Nidaros), where he was joyfully received. He then summoned the people to the Eyra-thing; and when the bondes met at the Thing, Magnus was taken to be king over the whole land, as far as his father Olaf had possessed it. Then the king selected a court, and named lendermen, and placed bailiffs and officers in all domains and offices. Immediately after harvest King Magnus ordered a levy through all Throndhjem land, and he collected men readily; and thereafter he proceeded southwards along the coast.

4. KING SVEIN'S FLIGHT.

King Svein Alfifason was staying in South Hordaland when he heard this news of war. He immediately sent out war-tokens to four different quarters, summoned the bondes to him, and made it known to all that they should join him with men and ships to defend the country. All the men who were in the neighbourhood of the king presented themselves; and the king formed a Thing,

at which in a speech he set forth his business, and said he would advance against Magnus Olafson and have a battle with him, if the bondes would aid his cause. The king's speech was not very long, and was not received with much approbation by the bondes. Afterwards the Danish chiefs who were about the king made long and clever speeches; but the bondes then took up the word, and answered them; and although many said they would follow Svein, and fight on his side, some refused to do so bluntly, some were altogether silent, and some declared they would join King Magnus as soon as they had an opportunity. Then King Svein says, "Me-thinks very few of the bondes to whom we sent a message have appeared here; and of those who have come, and tell us to our face that they will join King Magnus as soon as they can, we shall have as little benefit as of those who say they will sit at home quietly. It is the same with those who say nothing at all. But as to those who promise to help us, there are not more than every other man; and that force will avail us little against King Magnus. It is my counsel, therefore, that we do not trust to these bondes; but let us rather go to the land where all the people are sure and true to us, and where we will obtain forces to conquer this country again." As soon as the king had made known this resolution all his men followed it, turned their ship's bows, and hoisted sail. King Svein sailed eastward along the land, and then set right over to Denmark without delay, and Hardaknut received his brother Svein very kindly. At their first meeting Hardaknut offered King Svein to divide the kingdom of Denmark with him, which offer King Svein accepted.

5. KING MAGNUS'S JOURNEY TO NORWAY.

In autumn (A.D. 1035) King Magnus proceeded eastward to the end of the country, and was received as king throughout the whole land, and the country people were rejoiced at his arrival.

6. DEATH OF KING CANUTE THE GREAT AND HIS SON SVEIN.

King Svein, Canute's son, went to Denmark, as before related, and took part in the government with his brother Hardaknut. In the same autumn King Canute the Great died in England, the 13th November, forty years old, and was buried at Winchester. He had been king of Denmark for twenty-seven years, and over Denmark and England together twenty-four years, and also over Norway for seven years. King Canute's son Harald was then made king in England. The same winter (A.D. 1036) King Svein, Alfifa's son, died in Denmark. Thiodolf the skald made these lines concerning King Magnus:—

Through Sweden's dirty roads the throng
Followed the king in spearmen strong.
Svein doth fly, in truth afraid,
And partly by his men betrayed;
Flying to Denmark o'er the sea,
He leaves the land quite clear to thee.

Bjarne Gullbrarskald composed the following lines concerning Kalf Arnason:—

By thee the kings got each his own,—
Magnus by thee got Norway's throne;
And Svein in Denmark got a seat,
When out of Norway he was beat.
Kalf! It was you who showed the way
To our young king, the battle-lover,—
From Russia to his father's sway
You showed the way, and brought him over.

King Magnus ruled over Norway this winter (A.D. 1036), and Hardaknut over Denmark.

7. RECONCILIATION BETWEEN HARDAKNUT AND KING MAGNUS.

The following spring (A.D. 1036) the kings on both sides ordered out a levy, and the news was that they would have a battle at the Gaut river; but when the two armies approached each other, the lenders in the one army sent messengers to their connections and friends in the other; and it came to a proposal for a reconciliation between the two kings, especially as, from both kings being

but young and childish, some powerful men, who had been chosen in each of the countries for that purpose, had the rule of the country on their account. It thus was brought about that there was a friendly meeting between the kings, and in this meeting a peace was proposed; and the peace was to be a brotherly union under oath to keep the peace towards each other to the end of their lives; and if one of them should die without leaving a son, the longest liver should succeed to the whole land and people. Twelve of the principal men in each kingdom swore to the kings that this treaty should be observed, so long as any one of them was in life. Then the kings separated, and each returned home to his kingdom; and the treaty was kept as long as both lived.

8. OF QUEEN ASTRID.

Queen Astrid, who had been married to King Olaf the Saint, came to Norway with King Magnus her stepson, as before related, and was held by him deservedly in great honour and esteem. Then came also Alfild, King Magnus's mother, to the court, and the king received her with the greatest affection, and showed her great respect. But it went with Alfild, as it does with many who come to power and honour, that pride keeps pace with promotion. She was ill pleased that Queen Astrid was treated with more respect, had a higher seat, and more attention. Alfild wanted to have a seat next to the king, but Astrid called Alfild her slave-woman, as indeed she had formerly been when Astrid was queen of Norway and King Olaf ruled the land, and therefore would on no account let her have a seat beside her, and they could not lodge in the same house.

9. OF SIGVAT THE SKALD.

Sigvat the skald had gone to Rome, where he was at the time of the battle of Stiklestad.

He was on his way back from the South when he heard tidings of King Olaf's fall, which gave him great grief. He then sang these lines:—

One morning early on a hill,
The misty town asleep and still,
Wandering I thought upon the fields.
Strewed o'er with broken mail and shields,
Where our king fell,—our kind good king,
Where now his happy youthful spring?
My father too!—for Thord was then
One of the good king's chosen men.

One day Sigvat went through a village, and heard a husband lamenting grievously over the loss of his wife, striking his breast, tearing his clothes, weeping bitterly, and saying he wanted to die; and Sigvat sang these lines:—

This poor man mourns a much-loved wife,
Gladly would he be quit of life.
Must love be paid for by our grief?
The price seems great for joy so brief.
But the brave man who knows no fear
Drops for his king a silent tear,
And feels, perhaps, his loss as deep
As those who clamour when they weep.

Sigvat came home to Norway to the Throndhjem country, where he had a farm and children. He came from the South along the coast in a merchant vessel, and as they lay in Hillarsund they saw a great many ravens flying about. Then Sigvat said:—

I see here many a croaking raven
Flying about the well-known haven:
When Olaf's ship was floating here,
They knew that food for them was near;
When Olaf's ship lay here wind-bound,
Oft screamed the erne o'er Hillar sound,
Impatient for the expected prey,
And wont to follow to the fray.

When Sigvat came north to the town of Throndhjem King Svein was there before him. He invited Sigvat to stay with him, as Sigvat had formerly been with his father King Canute the Great; but Sigvat said he would first go home to his farm. One day, as Sigvat was walking in the street, he saw the king's men at play, and he sang:—

One day before I passed this way,
When the king's guards were at their play,
Something there was—I need not tell—
That made me pale, and feel unwell.
Perhaps it was I thought, just then,
How noble Olaf with his men,
In former days, I oft have seen
In manly games upon this green.

Sigvat then went to his farm; and as he heard that many men upbraided him with having deserted King Olaf, he made these verses:—

May Christ condemn me still to burn
In quenchless fire, if I did turn,
And leave King Olaf in his need,—
My soul is free from such base deed.
I was at Rome, as men know well
Who saw me there, and who can tell
That there in danger I was then:
The truth I need not hide from men.

Sigvat was ill at ease in his home. One day he went out and sang:—

While Olaf lived, how smiled the land!
Mountain and cliff, and pebbly strand.
All Norway then, so fresh, so gay,
On land or sea, where oft I lay.
But now to me all seems so dreary,
All black and dull—of life I'm weary;
Cheerless to-day, cheerless to-morrow—
Here in the North we have great sorrow.

Early in winter Sigvat went westward over the ridge of the country to Jämtaland, and onwards to Helsingjaland, and came to Svithjod. He went immediately to Queen Astrid, and was with her a long time, and was a welcome guest. He was also with her brother King Emund, and received from him ten marks of proved silver, as is related in the song of Canute. Sigvat always inquired of the merchants who traded to Novgorod if they could tell him any news of Magnus Olafson. Sigvat composed these lines at that time:—

I ask the merchant oft who drives
His trade to Russia, 'How he thrives,
Our noble prince? How lives he there?
And still good news—his praise—I hear.
To little birds, which wing their way
Between the lands, I fain would say,
How much we long our prince to see,
They seem to hear a wish from me.

10. OF KING MAGNUS'S FIRST ARRIVAL IN SVITHJOD.

Immediately after Magnus Olafson came to Svithjod from Russia, Sigvat met him at Queen Astrid's house, and glad they all were at meeting. Sigvat then sang:—

Thou art come here, prince, young and bold!
Thou art come home! With joy behold
Thy land and people. From this hour
I join myself to thy young power.
I could not o'er to Russia hie,—
Thy mother's guardian here was I.
It was my punishment for giving
Magnus his name, while scarcely living.

Afterwards Sigvat travelled with Queen Astrid, and followed Magnus to Norway. Sigvat sang thus:—

To the crowds streaming to the Thing,
To see and hear Magnus their king,
Loudly, young king, I'll speak my mind—
'God to His people has been kind.'
If He, to whom be all the praise,
Give us a son in all his ways
Like to his sire, no folk on earth
Will bless so much a royal birth.

Now when Magnus became king of Norway Sigvat attended him, and was his dearest friend. Once it happened that Queen Astrid and Alfhild the king's mother had exchanged some sharp words with each other, and Sigvat said:—

Alfhild! though it was God's will
To raise thee—yet remember still
The queen-born Astrid should not be
Kept out of due respect by thee.

11. KING OLAF'S SHRINE.

King Magnus had a shrine made and mounted with gold and silver, and studded with jewels. This shrine was made so that in shape and size it was like a coffin. Under it was an arched way, and above was a raised roof, with a head and a roof-ridge. Behind were plaited hangings; and before were gratings with padlocks, which could be locked with a key. In this shrine King Magnus had the holy remains of King Olaf deposited, and many were the miracles there wrought. Of this Sigvat speaks:—

For him a golden shrine is made,
For him whose heart was ne'er afraid
Of mortal man—the holy king,
Whom the Lord God to heaven did bring.
Here many a man shall feel his way,
Stone-blind, unconscious of the day,
And at the shrine where Olaf lies
Give songs of praise for opened eyes.

It was also appointed by law that King Olaf's holy day should be held sacred over all Norway, and that day has been kept ever afterwards as the greatest of Church days. Sigvat speaks of it:—

To Olaf, Magnus' father, raise,
Within my house, the song of praise!
With joy, yet grief, we'll keep the day
Olaf to heaven was called away.
Well may I keep within my breast
A day for him in holy rest,—
My upraised hands a golden ring
On every branch bear from that king.

12. OF THORER HUND.

Thorer Hund left the country immediately after King Olaf's fall. He went all the way to Jerusalem, and many people say he never came back. Thorer Hund had a son called Sigurd, father of Ranveig who was married to Joan, a son of Arne Arnason. Their children were Vidkun of Bjarkey, Sigurd Hund, Erling, and Jardtprud.

13. OF THE MURDER OF HAREK OF THJOTTA.

Harek of Thjotta sat at home on his farm, till King Magnus Olafson came to the country and was made king. Then Harek went south to Throndhjem to King Magnus. At that time Asmund Grankelson was in the king's house. When Harek came to Nidaros, and landed out of the ship, Asmund was standing with the king in the gallery outside the loft, and both the king and Asmund knew Harek when they saw him. "Now," says Asmund to the king, "I will pay Harek for my father's murder." He had in his hand a little thin hatchet. The king looked at him, and said, "Rather take this axe of mine." It was thick, and made like a club. "Thou must know, Asmund," added he, "that there are hard bones in the old fellow." Asmund took the axe, went down, and through the house, and when he came down to the cross-road Harek and his men coming up met him. Asmund struck Harek on the head, so that the axe penetrated to the brains; and that was Harek's death-wound. Asmund turned back directly to the king's house, and the whole edge of the axe was turned with the blow. Then said the king, "What would thy axe have done, for even this one, I think, is spoilt?" King Magnus afterwards gave him a fief and office in Halogaland, and many are the tales about the strife between Asmund and Harek's sons.

14. OF THORGEIR FLEK.

Kalf Arnason had at first, for some time, the greatest share of the government of the country under King Magnus; but afterwards there were people who reminded the king of the part Kalf had taken at Stiklestad, and then it became difficult for Kalf to give the king satisfaction in anything. Once it happened there were many men with the king bringing their affairs before him; and Thorgeir Flek from Sula in Veradal, of whom mention is made before in the history of King Olaf the Saint, came to him about some needful business. The king paid no attention to his words, but was listening to people who stood near him. Then Thorgeir said to the king, so loud that all who were around him could hear:—

Listen, my lord, to my plain word.
I too was there, and had to bear
A bloody head from Stiklestad:

For I was then with Olaf's men.
 Listen to me: well did I see
 The men you're trusting the dead corpse thrusting
 Out of their way, as dead it lay;
 And striking o'er your father's gore.

There was instantly a great uproar, and some told Thorgeir to go out; but the king called him, and not only despatched his business to his satisfaction, but promised him favour and friendship.

15. KALF ARNASON FLIES THE COUNTRY

Soon after this the king was at a feast at the farm of Haug in Veradel, and at the dinner-table Kalf Arnason sat upon one side of him, and Einar Tambaskelfer on the other. It was already come so far that the king took little notice of Kalf, but paid most attention to Einar. The king said to Einar, "Let us ride to-day to Stiklestad. I should like to see the memorials of the things which took place there." Einar replies, "I can tell thee nothing about it; but take thy foster-father Kalf with thee; he can give thee information about all that took place." When the tables were removed, the king made himself ready, and said to Kalf, "Thou must go with me to Stiklestad."

Kalf replied, "That is really not my duty."

Then the king stood up in a passion, and said, "Go thou shalt, Kalf!" and thereupon he went out.

Kalf put on his riding clothes in all haste, and said to his foot-boy, "Thou must ride directly to Eggja, and order my house-servants to ship all my property on board my ship before sunset."

King Magnus now rides to Stiklestad, and Kalf with him. They alighted from horseback, and went to the place where the battle had been. Then said the king to Kalf, "Where is the spot at which the king fell?"

Kalf stretched out his spear-shaft, and said, "There he lay when he fell."

The king: "And where wast thou, Kalf?"

Kalf: "Here where I am now standing."

The king turned red as blood in the face, and said, "Then thy axe could well have reached him."

Kalf replied, "My axe did not come near him;" and immediately went to his horse, sprang on horseback, and rode away with all his men; and the king rode back to Haug. Kalf did not stop until he got home in the evening to Eggja. There his ship lay ready at the shore side, and all his effects were on board, and the vessel manned with his house-servants. They set off immediately by night down the fjord, and afterwards proceeded day and night, when the wind suited. He sailed out into the West sea, and was there a long time plundering in Ireland, Scotland, and the Hebudes. Bjarne Gullbraskald tells of this in the song about Kalf:—

Brother of Thorberg, who still stood
 Well with the king! in angry mood
 He is the first to break with thee,
 Who well deserves esteemed to be;
 He is the first who friendship broke,
 For envious men the falsehood spoke;
 And he will be the first to rue
 The breach of friendship 'twixt you two.

16. OF THE THREATS OF THE BONDES.

King Magnus added to his property Veggja, which Hrut had been owner of, and Kviststad, which had belonged to Thorgeir, and also Eggja, with all the goods which Kalf had left behind him; and thus he confiscated to the king's estate many great farms, which had belonged to those of the bonde-army who had fallen at Stiklestad. In like manner, he laid heavy fines upon many of those who made the greatest opposition to King Olaf. He drove some out of the country, took large sums of money from others, and had the cattle of others slaughtered for his use. Then the bondes began to murmur, and to say among themselves, "Will he go on in the same way as his father and other chiefs, whom we made an end of when their pride and lawless proceedings became insupportable?" This discontent spread widely through the country. The people of Sogn gathered men, and, it was said, were determined to give battle to King Magnus, if he came into the Fjord district. King Magnus was then in Hordaland, where he had remained a long time with a numerous retinue, and was now come to the resolution to proceed

north to Sogn. When the king's friends observed this, twelve men had a meeting, and resolved to determine by casting lots which of them should inform the king of the discontent of the people; and it so happened that the lot fell upon Sigvat.

17. OF THE FREE-SPEAKING SONG ("BERSOGLISVISUR").

Sigvat accordingly composed a poem, which he called the "Free-speaking Song", which begins with saying the king had delayed too long to pacify the people, who were threatening to rise in tumult against him. He said:—

Here in the south, from Sogn is spread
 The news that strife draws to a head:
 The bondes will the king oppose—
 Kings and their folk should ne'er be foes.
 Let us take arms, and briskly go
 To battle, if it must be so;
 Defend our king—but still deplore
 His land plunged in such strife once more.

In this song are also these verses:—

Hakon, who at Fitjar died,—
 Hakon the Good, could not abide
 The viking rule, or robber train,
 And all men's love he thus did gain.
 The people since have still in mind
 The laws of Hakon, just and kind;
 And men will never see the day
 When Hakon's laws have passed away.
 "The bondes ask but what is fair;
 The Olafs and the Earls, when there
 Where Magnus sits, confirmed to all
 Their lands and gear—to great and small,
 Bold Trygve's son, and Harald's heir,
 The Olafs, while on earth they were,
 Observed the laws themselves had made,
 And none was for his own afraid.
 "Let not thy counsellors stir thy wrath
 Against the man who speaks the truth;
 Thy honour lies in thy good sword,
 But still more in thy royal word;
 And, if the people do not lie,
 The new laws turn out not nigh
 So just and mild, as the laws given
 At Ulfasund in face of heaven.
 "Dread king! who urges thee to break
 Thy pledged word, and back to take
 Thy promise given? Thou warrior hold;
 With thy own people word to hold,
 Thy promise fully to maintain,
 Is to thyself the greatest gain:
 The battle-storm raiser he
 Must by his own men trusted be.
 "Who urges thee, who seek st renown,
 The bondes' cattle to cut down?
 No king before e'er took in hand
 Such viking-work in his own land.
 Such rapine men will not long bear,
 And the king's counsellors will but share
 In their ill-will: when once inflamed,
 The king himself for all is blamed.
 "Do cautious, with this news of treason
 Flying about—give them no reason.
 We hange the thief, but then we use
 Consideration of the excuse.
 I think, great king (who wilt rejoice
 Eagle and wolf with battle voice),
 It would be wise not to oppose
 Thy bondes, and make them thy foes.
 "A dangerous sign it is, I fear,
 That old grey-bearded men appear
 In corners whispering at the Thing,
 As if they had bad news to bring.
 The young sit still,—no laugh, or shout,—
 More looks than words passing shout;
 And groups of whispering heads are seen,
 On buttoned breasts, with lowering mien.
 "Among the udalmen, they say
 The king, if he could have his way,
 Would seize the bondes' udal land,
 And free-born men must this withstand.
 In truth the man whose udal field,
 By any doom that law can yield
 From him adjudged the king would take,
 Could the king's throne and power shake.

This verse is the last:—

A holy bond between us still
 Makes me wish speedy end to ill:

The sluggard waits till afternoon,—
At once great Magnus! grant our boon.
Then we will serve with heart and hand,
With thee we'll fight by sea or land:
With Olaf's sword take Olaf's mind,
And to thy bondes be more kind.

In this song the king was exhorted to observe the laws which his father had established. This exhortation had a good effect on the king, for many others held the same language to him. So at last the king consulted the most prudent men, who ordered all affairs according to law. Thereafter King Magnus had the law-book composed in writing which is still in use in Throndhjem district, and is called "The Grey Goose". King Magnus afterwards became very popular, and was beloved by all the country people, and therefore he was called Magnus the Good.

18. OF THE ENGLISH KINGS.

The king of the English, King Harald, died (A.D. 1040) five years after his father King Canute, and was buried beside his father at Winchester. After his death his brother Hardaknut, the second son of the old King Canute, was king of England, and was thus king both of Denmark and England. He ruled these kingdoms two years, and then died of sickness in England, leaving no children. He was buried at Winchester beside his father. After his death Edward the Good, a son of the English king Ethelred (and Emma, a daughter of Richard earl of Rouen), was chosen king in England. King Edward the Good was, on his mother's side, a brother of Harald and Hardaknut, the sons of Canute the Great; and the daughter of Canute and Queen Emma was Gunhild, who was married to the Emperor Henry of Germany, who was called Henry the Mild. Gunhild had been three years in Germany when she fell sick, and she died five years after the death of her father King Canute the Great.

19. OF KING MAGNUS OLAFSON.

When King Magnus Olafson heard of Hardaknut's death, he immediately sent people south to Denmark, with a message to the men who had bound themselves by oath to the peace and agreement which was made between King Magnus and Hardaknut, and reminded them of their pledge. He added, as a conclusion, that in summer (A.D. 1042,) he would come with his army to Denmark to take possession of his Danish dominions, in terms of the agreement, or to fall in the field with his army. So says Arnor, the earls' skald:—

Wise were the words, exceeding wise,
Of him who stills the hungriest cries
Of beasts of prey—the earl's lord;
And soon fulfilled will be his word:
'With his good sword he'll Denmark gain,
Or fall upon a bloody plain;
And rather than give up his cause,
Will leave his corpse to raven's claws.'

20. KING MAGNUS'S ARMAMENT.

Thereafter King Magnus gathered together a great army, and summoned to him all lendemen and powerful bondes, and collected war-ships. When the army was assembled it was very handsome, and well fitted out. He had seventy large vessels when he sailed from Norway. So says Thiodolf the skald:—

Brave king! the terror of the foe,
With thee will many a long-ship go.
Full seventy sail are gathered here,
Eastward with their great king to steer.
And southward now the bright keel glides;
O'er the white waves the Bison rides.
Sails swell, yards crack, the highest mast
O'er the wide sea scarce seen at last.

Here it related that King Magnus had the great Bison, which his father King Olaf had built. It had more than thirty banks of rowers; and forward on the bow was a great buffalo head, and aft on the stern-post was its tail. Both the head and the tail, and both sides of the ship, were gilded over. Of this speaks Arnor, the earls' skald:—

The white foam lashing o'er the deck
Oft made the gilded head to shake;

The helm down, the vessel's heel
Oft showed her stem's bright-glancing steel.
Around Stavanger-point careering,
Through the wild sea's white flames steering,
Tackle loud singing to the strain,
The storm-horse flies to Denmark's plain.

King Magnus set out to sea from Agder, and sailed over to Jutland. So says Arnor:—

I can relate how through the gale
The gallant Bison carried sail.
With her lee gunwale in the wave,
The king on board, Magnus the brave!
The iron-clad Thingmen's chief to see
On Jutland's coast right glad were we,—
Right glad our men to see a king
Who in the fight his sword could swing.

21. KING MAGNUS COMES TO DENMARK.

When King Magnus came to Denmark he was joyfully received. He appointed a Thing without delay, to which he summoned the people of the country, and desired they would take him as king, according to the agreement which had been entered into. As the highest of the chiefs of the country were bound by oath to King Magnus, and were desirous of keeping their word and oath, they endeavoured zealously to promote the cause with the people. It contributed also that King Canute the Great, and all his descendants, were dead; and a third assistance was, that his father King Olaf's sanctity and miracles were become celebrated in all countries.

22. KING MAGNUS CHOSEN KING OF DENMARK.

King Magnus afterwards ordered the people to be summoned to Viborg to a Thing. Both in older and later times, the Danes elected their kings at the Viborg Thing. At this Thing the Danes chose Magnus Olafson to be king of all the Danish dominions. King Magnus remained long in Denmark during the summer (A.D. 1042); and wherever he came the people received him joyfully, and obeyed him willingly. He divided the country into baronies and districts, and gave fiefs to men of power in the land. Late in autumn he returned with his fleet to Norway, but lay for some time at the Gaut river.

23. OF SVEIN ULFSON.

There was a man, by name Svein, a son of Earl Ulf, and grandson of Thorgils Sprakaleg. Svein's mother was Astrid, a daughter of King Svein Forkbeard. She was a sister of Canute the Great by the father's side, and of the Swedish King Olaf Eirikson by the mother's side; for her mother was Queen Sigrid the Haughty, a daughter of Skoglar Toste. Svein Ulfson had been a long time living with his relation the Swedish king, ever since King Canute had ordered his father Ulf to be killed, as is related in the saga of old King Canute, that he had his brother-in-law, Earl Ulf, murdered in Roskilde; and on which account Svein had not since been in Denmark. Svein Ulfson was one of the handsomest men that could be seen; he was very stout and strong, and very expert in all exercises, and a well-spoken man withal. Every one who knew him said he had every quality which became a good chief. Svein Ulfson waited upon King Magnus while he lay in the Gaut river, as before mentioned, and the king received him kindly, as he was by many advised to do; for Svein was a particularly popular man. He could also speak for himself to the king well and cleverly; so that it came at last to Svein's entering into King Magnus's service, and becoming his man. They often talked together afterwards in private concerning many affairs.

24. SVEIN ULFSON CREATED AN EARL.

One day, as King Magnus sat in his high-seat and many people were around him, Svein Ulfson sat upon a footstool before the king. The king then made a speech: "Be it known to you, chiefs, and the people in general, that I have taken the following resolution. Here is a distinguished man, both for family and for his own merits, Svein Ulfson, who has entered into my service, and given me promise of fidelity. Now, as ye know, the Danes have

this summer become my men, so that when I am absent from the country it is without a head; and it is not unknown to you how it is ravaged by the people of Vindland, Kurland, and others from the Baltic, as well as by Saxons. Therefore I promised them a chief who could defend and rule their land; and I know no man better fitted, in all respects, for this than Svein Ulfson, who is of birth to be chief of the country. I will therefore make him my earl, and give him the government of my Danish dominions while I am in Norway; just as King Canute the Great set his father, Earl Ulf, over Denmark while he was in England."

Then Einar Tambaskelfer said, "Too great an earl—too great an earl, my foster-son!"

The king replied in a passion, "Ye have a poor opinion of my judgment, I think. Some consider that ye are too great earls, and others that ye are fit for nothing."

Then the king stood up, took a sword, and girt it on the earl's loins, and took a shield and fastened it on his shoulders, put a helmet upon his head, and gave him the title of earl, with the same fiefs in Denmark which his father Earl Ulf had formerly held. Afterwards a shrine was brought forth containing holy relics, and Svein laid his hand hereon, and swore the oath of fidelity to King Magnus; upon which the king led the earl to the highseat by his side. So says Thiodolf:—

Twas at the Gaut river's shore,
With hand on shrine Svein Ulfson swore.
King Magnus first said o'er the oath,
With which Svein Ulfson pledged his troth.
The vows by Svein solemnly given,
On holy bones of saints in heaven,
To Magnus seemed both fair and fast;
He found they were too fair to last.

Earl Svein went thereafter to Denmark, and the whole nation received him well. He established a court about him, and soon became a great man. In winter (A.D. 1043), he went much about the country, and made friends among the powerful chiefs; and, indeed, he was beloved by all the people of the land.

25. KING MAGNUS'S FORAY.

King Magnus proceeded northward to Norway with his fleet, and wintered there; but when the spring set in (A.D. 1048) he gathered a large force, with which he sailed south to Denmark, having heard the news from Vindland that the Vindland people in Jomsborg had withdrawn from their submission to him. The Danish kings had formerly had a very large earldom there, and they first founded Jomsborg; and now the place was become a very strong fortress. When King Magnus heard of this, he ordered a large fleet and army to be levied in Denmark, and sailed in summer to Vindland with all his forces, which made a very large army altogether. Arnor, the earls' skald, tells of it thus:—

Now in this strophe, royal youth!
I tell no more than the plain truth.
Thy armed outfit from the strand
Left many a keel-trace on the sand,
And never did a king before
SO many ships to any shore
Lead on, as thou to Vindland's isle:
The Vindland men in fright recoil.

Now when King Magnus came to Vindland he attacked Jomsborg, and soon took the fortress, killing many people, burning and destroying both in the town and in the courttry all around, and making the greatest havoc. So says Arnor, the earl's skald:—

The robbers, hemmed 'twixt death and fire,
Knew not how to escape thy ire;
O'er Jomsborg castle's highest towers
Thy wrath the whirlwind-fire pours.
The heathen on his false gods calls,
And trembles even in their halls;
And by the light from its own flame
The king this viking-hold o'ercame.

Many people in Vindland submitted to King Magnus, but many more got out of the way and fled. King Magnus returned to Denmark, and prepared to take his winter abode there, and sent away the Danish, and also a great many of the Norwegian people he had brought with him.

26. SVEIN RECEIVES THE TITLE OF KING.

The same winter (A.D. 1043), in which Svein Ulfson was raised to the government of the whole Danish dominions, and had made friends of a great number of the principal chiefs in Denmark, and obtained the affections of the people, he assumed by the advice of many of the chiefs the title of king. But when in the spring thereafter he heard that King Magnus had come from the north with a great army, Svein went over to Scania, from thence up to Gautland, and so on to Svithjod to his relation, King Emund, where he remained all summer, and sent spies out to Denmark, to inquire about the king's proceedings and the number of his men. Now when Svein heard that King Magnus had let a great part of his army go away, and also that he was south in Jutland, he rode from Svithjod with a great body of people which the Swedish king had given him. When Svein came to Scania the people of that country received him well, treated him as their king, and men joined him in crowds. He then went on to Seeland, where he was also well received, and the whole country joined him. He then went to Fyen, and laid all the islands under his power; and as the people also joined him, he collected a great army and many ships of war.

27. OF KING MAGNUS'S MILITARY FORCE.

King Magnus heard this news, and at the same time that the people of Vindland had a large force on foot. He summoned people therefore to come to him, and drew together a great army in Jutland. Otto, also, the Duke of Brunsvik, who had married Ulfhild, King Olaf the Saint's daughter, and the sister of King Magnus, came to him with a great troop. The Danish chiefs pressed King Magnus to advance against the Vindland army, and not allow pagans to march over and lay waste the country; so it was resolved that the king with his army should proceed south to Heidaby. While King Magnus lay at Skotborg river, on Hlyrskog Heath, he got intelligence concerning the Vindland army, and that it was so numerous it could not be counted; whereas King Magnus had so few, that there seemed no chance for him but to fly. The king, however, determined on fighting, if there was any possibility of gaining the victory; but the most dissuaded him from venturing on an engagement, and all, as one man, said that the Vindland people had undoubtedly a prodigious force. Duke Otto, however, pressed much to go to battle. Then the king ordered the whole army to be gathered by the war trumpets into battle array, and ordered all the men to arm, and to lie down for the night under their shields; for he was told the enemy's army had come to the neighbourhood. The king was very thoughtful; for he was vexed that he should be obliged to fly, which fate he had never experienced before. He slept but little all night, and chanted his prayers.

28. OF KING OLAF'S MIRACLE.

The following day was Michaelmas eve. Towards dawn the king slumbered, and dreamt that his father, King Olaf the Saint, appeared to him, and said, "Art thou so melancholy and afraid, because the Vindland people come against thee with a great army? Be not afraid of heathens, although they be many; for I shall be with thee in the battle. Prepare, therefore, to give battle to the Vindlanders, when thou hearest my trumpet." When the king awoke he told his dream to his men, and the day was then dawning. At that moment all the people heard a ringing of bells in the air; and those among King Magnus's men who had been in Nidaros thought that it was the ringing of the bell called Glod, which King Olaf had presented to the church of Saint Clement in the town of Nidaros.

29. BATTLE OF HLYRSKOG HEATH.

Then King Magnus stood up, and ordered the war trumpets to sound, and at that moment the Vindland army advanced from the south across the river against him; on which the whole of the king's army stood up, and advanced against the heathens. King Magnus threw off from him his coat of ring-mail, and had a red silk shirt outside over his clothes, and had in his hands the battle-axe called Hel, which had belonged to King Olaf. King Magnus ran on before all his men to the enemy's army, and instantly hewed

down with both hands every man who came against him. So says Arnor, the earls' skald:—

His armour on the ground he flung
His broad axe round his head he swung;
And Norway's king strode on in might,
Through ringing swords, to the wild fight.
His broad axe Hel with both hands wielding,
Shields, helms, and skulls before it yielding,
He seemed with Fate the world to share,
And life or death to deal out there.

This battle was not very long; for the king's men were very fiery, and where they came the Vindland men fell as thick as tangles heaped up by the waves on the strand. They who stood behind betook themselves to flight, and were hewed down like cattle at a slaughter. The king himself drove the fugitives eastward over the heath, and people fell all over the moor. So says Thiodolf:—

And foremost he pursued,
And the flying foe down hewed;
An eagle's feast each stroke,
As the Vindland helms he broke.
He drove them o'er the hearth,
And they fly from bloody death;
But the moor, a mile or more,
With the dead was studded o'er.

It is a common saying, that there never was so great a slaughter of men in the northern lands, since the time of Christianity, as took place among the Vindland people on Hlyrskog's Heath. On the other side, not many of King Magnus's people were killed, although many were wounded. After the battle the king ordered the wounds of his men to be bound; but there were not so many doctors in the army as were necessary, so the king himself went round, and felt the hands of those he thought best suited for the business; and when he had thus stroked their palms, he named twelve men, who, he thought, had the softest hands, and told them to bind the wounds of the people; and although none of them had ever tried it before, they all became afterwards the best of doctors. There were two Iceland men among them; the one was Thorkil, a son of Geire, from Lyngar; the other was Atle, father of Bard Svarte of Selardal, from whom many good doctors are descended. After this battle, the report of the miracle which King Olaf the Saint had worked was spread widely through the country; and it was the common saying of the people, that no man could venture to fight against King Magnus Olafson, for his father Saint Olaf stood so near to him that his enemies, on that account, never could do him harm.

30. BATTLE AT RE.

King Magnus immediately turned round with his army against Svein, whom he called his earl, although the Danes called him their king; and he collected ships, and a great force, and on both sides a great strength was assembled. In Svein's army were many chiefs from Scania, Halland, Seeland, and Fyen; while King Magnus, on the other hand, had mostly Norway and Jutland men, and with that war-force he hastened to meet Svein. They met at Re, near Vestland; and there was a great battle, which ended in King Magnus gaining the victory, and Svein taking flight. After losing many people, Svein fled back to Scania, and from thence to Gautland, which was a safe refuge if he needed it, and stood open to him. King Magnus returned to Jutland, where he remained all winter (A.D. 1044) with many people, and had a guard to watch his ships. Arnor, the earls' skald, speaks of this:—

At Re our battle-loving lord
In bloody meeting stained his sword,—
At Re upon the western shore,
In Vestland warrior's blood once more.

31. BATTLE AT AROS.

Svein Ulfson went directly to his ships as soon as he heard that King Magnus had left his fleet. He drew to him all the men he could, and went round in winter among the islands, Seeland, Fyen, and others. Towards Yule he sailed to Jutland, and went into Limfjord, where many people submitted to him. He imposed scat upon some, but some joined King Magnus. Now when King Magnus heard what Svein was doing, he betook himself to his ships

with all the Northmen then in Denmark, and a part of the Danish troops, and steered south along the land. Svein was then in Aros with a great force; and when he heard of King Magnus he laid his vessels without the town, and prepared for battle. When King Magnus heard for certain where Svein was, and that the distance between them was but short, he held a House-thing, and addressed his people thus: "It is reported to me that the earl and his fleet are lying not far from us, and that he has many people. Now I would let you know that I intend to go out against the earl and fight for it, although, we have fewer people. We will, as formerly, put our trust in God, and Saint Olaf, my father, who has given us victory sometimes when we fought, even though we had fewer men than the enemy. Now I would have you get ready to seek out the enemy, and give battle the moment we find him by rowing all to attack, and being all ready for battle." Thereupon the men put on their weapons, each man making himself and his place ready; and then they stretched themselves to their oars. When they saw the earl's ships they rowed towards them, and made ready to attack. When Svein's men saw the forces they armed themselves, bound their ships together, and then began one of the sharpest of battles. So says Thiodolf, the skald:—

Shield against shield, the earl and king
Made shields and swords together ring.
The gold-decked heroes made a play
Which Hild's iron-shirt men say
They never saw before or since
On battle-deck; the brave might wince,
As spear and arrow whistling flew,
Point blank, death-bringing, quick and true.

They fought at the bows, so that the men only on the bows could strike; the men on the fore-castle thrust with spears: and all who were farther off shot with light spears or javelins, or war-arrows. Some fought with stones or short stakes; and those who were aft of the mast shot with the bow. So says Thiodolf:—

Steel-pointed spear, and sharpened stake,
Made the broad shield on arm shake:
The eagle, hovering in the air,
Screamed o'er the prey preparing there.
And stones and arrows quickly flew,
And many a warrior bold they slew.
The bowman never twanged his bow
And drew his shaft so oft as now;
And Thronhjelm's bowmen on that day
Were not the first tired of this play:
Arrows and darts so quickly fly,
You could not follow with the eye.

Here it appears how hot the battle was with casting weapons. King Magnus stood in the beginning of the battle within a shield-rampart; but as it appeared to him that matters were going on too slowly, he leaped over the shields, and rushed forward in the ship, encouraging his men with a loud cheer, and springing to the bows, where the battle was going on hand to hand. When his men saw this they urged each other on with mutual cheering, and there was one great hurrah through all the ships. So says Thiodolf:—

'On with our ships! on to the foe!'
Cry Magnus' men—on, on they go.
Spears against shields in fury rattle,—
Was never seen so fierce a battle.

And now the battle was exceedingly sharp; and in the assault Svein's ship was cleared of all her fore-castle men, upon and on both sides of the fore-castle. Then Magnus boarded Svein's ship, followed by his men; and one after the other came up, and made so stout an assault that Svein's men gave way, and King Magnus first cleared that ship, and then the rest, one after the other. Svein fled, with a great part of his people; but many fell, and many got life and peace. Thiodolf tells of this:—

Brave Magnus, from the stern springing
On to the stem, where swords were ringing
From his sea-raven's beak of gold
Deals death around—the brave! the bold!
The earl's housemen now begin
To shrink and fall: their ranks grow thin—
The king's luck thrives—their decks are cleared,
Of fighting men no more appeared.
The earl's ships are driven to flight,
Before the king would stop the fight:
The gold-distributor first then
Gave quarters to the vanquished men.

This battle was fought on the last Sunday before Yule. So says Thiodolf:—

'Twas on a Sunday morning bright,
Fell out this great and bloody fight,
When men were arming, fighting, dying,
Or on the red decks wounded lying.
And many a man, foredoomed to die,
To save his life o'erboard did fly,
But sank; for swimming could not save,
And dead men rolled in every wave.

Magnus took seven ships from Svein's people. So says Thiodolf:—

Thick Olaf's son seven vessels cleared,
And with his fleet the prizes steered.
The Norway girls will not be sad
To hear such news—each from her lad.

He also sings:—

The captured men will grieve the most
Svein and their comrades to have lost;
For it went ill with those who fled,
Their wounded had no easy bed.
A heavy storm that very night
O'ertook them flying from the fight;
And skulls and bones are tumbling round,
Under the sea, on sandy ground.

Svein fled immediately by night to Seeland, with the men who had escaped and were inclined to follow him; but King Magnus brought his ships to the shore, and sent his men up the country in the night-time, and early in the morning they came flown to the strand with a great booty in cattle. Thiodolf tells about it:—

But yesterday with heavy stones
We crushed their skulls, and broke their bones,
And thinned their ranks; and now to-day
Up through their land we've ta'en our way,
And driven their cattle to the shore,
And filled out ships with food in store.
To save his land from our quick swords,
Svein will need something more than words.

32. SVEIN'S FLIGHT.

King Magnus sailed with his fleet from the south after Svein to Seeland; but as soon as the king came there Svein fled up the country with his men, and Magnus followed them, and pursued the fugitives, killing all that were laid hold of. So says Thiodolf:—

The Seeland girl asks with fear,
'Whose blood-bespattered shield and spear—
The earl's or king's—up from the shore
Moved on with many a warrior more?'
We scoured through all their muddy lanes,
Woodlands, and fields, and miry plains.
Their hasty footmarks in the clay
Showed that to Ringsted led their way.
'Spattered with mud from heel to head,
Our gallant lord his true men led.
Will Lund's earl halt his hasty flight,
And try on land another fight?
His banner yesterday was seen,
The sand-bills and green trees between,
Through moss and mire to the strand,
In arrow flight, leaving the land.

Then Svein fled over to Fyen Island, and King Magnus carried fire and sword through Seeland, and burnt all round, because their men had joined Svein's troop in harvest. So says Thiodolf:—

As Svein in winter had destroyed
The royal house, the king employed
No little force to guard the land,
And the earl's forays to withstand.
An armed band one morn he found,
And so beset them round and round,
That Canute's nephew quickly fled,
Or he would have been captive led.
'Our Thronhjelm king in his just ire
Laid waste the land with sword and fire,
Burst every house, and over all
Struck terror into great and small.
To the earl's friends he well repaid
Their deadly hate—such wild work made
On them and theirs, that from his fury,
Flying for life, away they hurry.

33. BURNING IN FYEN.

As soon as King Magnus heard that Svein with his troops had gone across to Fyen, he sailed after them; and when Svein heard this news he went on board ship and sailed to Scania, and from thence to Gautland, and at last to the Swedish King. King Magnus landed in Fyen, and plundered and burned over all; and all of Svein's men who came there fled far enough. Thiodolf speaks of it thus:—

Fiona isle, once green and fair,
Lies black and reeking through the air:
The red fog rises, thick and hot,
From burning farm and smouldering cot.
The gaping thralls in terror gaze
On the broad upward-spiring blaze,
From thatched roofs and oak-built walls,
Their murdered masters' stately halls.
'Svein's men, my girl, will not forget
That thrice they have the Norsemen met,
By sea, by land, with steel, with fire,
Thrice have they felt the Norse king's ire.
Fiona's maids are slim and fair,
The lovely prizes, lads, we'll share:
Some stand to arms in rank and row,
Some seize, bring off, and fend with blow.

After this the people of Denmark submitted to King Magnus, and during the rest of the winter, there was peace. King Magnus then appointed some of his men to govern Denmark; and when spring was advanced he sailed northwards with his fleet to Norway, where he remained a great part of the summer.

34. BATTLE AT HELGANES

Now, when Svein heard that King Magnus had gone to Norway he rode straight down, and had many people out of Svithjod with him. The people of Scania received him well, and he again collected an army, with which he first crossed over into Seeland and seized upon it and Fyen, and all the other isles. When King Magnus heard of this he gathered together men and ships, and sailed to Denmark; and as soon as he knew where Svein was lying with his ships King Magnus sailed to meet him. They met at a place called Helganes, and the battle began about the fall of day. King Magnus had fewer men, but larger and better equipt vessels. So says Arnor, the earls' skald:—

At Helganes—so goes the tale—
The brave wolf-feeder, under sail,
Made many an ocean-elm his prey,
Seized many a ship ere break of day.
When twilight fell he urged the fight,
Close combat—man to man all night;
Through a long harvest night's dark hours,
Down poured the battle's iron showers.

The battle was very hot, and as night advanced the fall of men was great. King Magnus, during the whole night, threw hand-spears. Thiodolf speaks of this:—

And there at Helganes sunk down,
Sore wounded, men of great renown;
And Svein's retainers lost all heart,
Ducking before the flying dart.
The Norsemen's king let fly his spears,
His death-wounds adding to their fears;
For each spear-blade was wet all o'er,
Up to the shaft in their life-gore.

To make a short tale, King Magnus won the victory in this battle, and Svein fled. His ship was cleared of men from stem to stern; and it went so on board many others of his ships. So says Thiodolf:—

Earl Svein fled from the empty deck,
His lonely ship an unmann'd wreck;
Magnus the Good, the people's friend,
Pressed to the death on the false Svein.
Hneiter, the sword his father bore,
Was edge and point, stained red with gore;
Swords sprinkle blood o'er armour bright,
When kings for land and power fight.

And Arnor says:—

The cutters of Bjorn's own brother
Soon changed their owner for another;
The king took them and all their gear;
The crews, however, got off clear.

A great number of Svein's men fell, and King Magnus and his men had a vast booty to divide. So says Thiodolf:—

Where the Norsemen the Danish slew,
A Gautland shield and breast-plate true
Fell to my share of spoil by lot;
And something more i' the south I got:
(There all the summer swords were ringing)
A helm, gay arms, and gear worth bringing,
Home to my quiet lovely one
I sent—with news how we had won.

Svein fled up to Scania with all the men who escaped with him; and King Magnus and his people drove the fugitives up through the country without meeting any opposition either from Svein's men or the bondes. So says Thiodolf:—

Olaf's brave son then gave command,
All his ships' crews should quickly land:
King Magnus, marching at their head,
A noble band of warriors led.
A foray through the land he makes;
Denmark in every quarter shakes.
Up hill and down the horses scour,
Carrying the Danes from Norsemen's power.

King Magnus drove with fire and sword through the land. So says Thiodolf:—

And now the Norsemen storm along,
Following their banner in a throng:
King Magnus' banner flames on high,
A star to guide our roaming by.
To Lund, o'er Scania's peaceful field,
My shoulder bore my useless shield;
A fairer land, a better road,
As friend or foe, I never trod.

They began to burn the habitations all around, and the people fled on every side. So says Thiodolf:—

Our ice-cold iron in great store,
Our arms, beside the king we bore:
The Scanian rogues fly at the view
Of men and steel all sharp and true.
Their timbered houses flame on high,
Red flashing over half the sky;
The blazing town flings forth its light,
Lighting the cowards on their flight.

And he also sang:—

The king o'er all the Danish land
Roams, with his fire-bringing band:
The house, the hut, the farm, the town,
All where men dwelt is burned down.
O'er Denmark's plains and corn-fields,
Meadows and moors, are seen our shields:
Victorious over all, we chase
Svein's wounded men from place to place.
"Across Fiona's moor again,
The paths late trodden by our men
We tread once more, until quite near,
Through morning mist, the foes appear.
Then up our numerous banners flare
In the cold early morning air;
And they from Magnus' power who fly
Cannot this quick war-work deny.

Then Svein fled eastwards along Scania, and King Magnus returned to his ships, and steered eastwards also along the Scanian coast, having got ready with the greatest haste to sail. Thiodolf sings thus about it:—

No drink but the salt sea
On board our ships had we,
When, following our king,
On board our ships we spring.
Hard work on the salt sea,
Off Scania's coast, had we;
But we laboured for the king,
To his foemen death to bring.

Svein fled to Gautland, and then sought refuge with the Swedish king, with whom he remained all winter (A.D. 1046), and was treated with great respect.

35. OF KING MAGNUS'S CAMPAIGN.

When King Magnus had subdued Scania he turned about, and first went to Falster, where he landed, plundered, and killed many people who had before submitted to Svein. Arnor speaks of this:—

A bloody vengeance for their guile
King Magnus takes on Falster Isle;
The treacherous Danes his fury feel,
And fall before his purpled steel.
The battle-field is covered o'er,
With eagle's prey from shore to shore;
And the king's courtmen were the first
To quench with blood the raven's thirst.

Thereafter Magnus with his fleet proceeded to the isle of Fyen, went on land, plundered, and made great devastation. So says Arnor, the earls' skald:—

To fair Fiona's grassy shore
His banner now again he bore:
He who the mail-shirt's linked chains
Severs, and all its lustre stains,—
He will be long remembered there,
The warrior in his twentieth year,
Whom their black ravens from afar
Saluted as he went to war.

36. OF KING MAGNUS'S BATTLES.

King Magnus remained in Denmark all that winter (A.D. 1046), and sat in peace. He had held many battles, and had gained the victory in all. So says Od Kikinaskald:—

'Fore Michaelmas was struck the blow,
That laid the Vindland vikings low;
And people learned with joy to hear
The clang of arms, and leaders' cheer.
Short before Yule fell out the day,
Southward of Aros, where the fray,
Though not enough the foe to quell,
Was of the bloodiest men can tell.

And Arnor says:—

Olaf's avenger who can sing?
The skald cannot o'er take the king,
Who makes the war-bird daily drain
The corpse-blood of his foemen slain.
Four battles won within a year,—
Breaker of shields! with swords and spear,
And hand to hand, exalt thy fame
Above the kings of greatest name.

King Magnus had three battles with Svein Ulfson. So says Thiodolf:—

To our brave Throndhjem sovereign's praise
The skald may all his skaldcraft raise;
For fortune, and for daring deed,
His song will not the truth exceed.
After three battles to regain
What was his own, unjustly ta'en,
Unjustly kept, and dues denied,
He levied dues in red-blood dyed.

37. OF KING MAGNUS, AND THORFIN AND RAGNVALD, EARLS OF ORKNEY.

While King Magnus the Good, a son of King Olaf the Saint, ruled over Norway, as before related, the Earl Ragnvald Brusason lived with him. Earl Thorfin Sigurdson, the uncle of Ragnvald, ruled then over Orkney. King Magnus sent Ragnvald west to Orkney, and ordered that Thorfin should let him have his father's heritage. Thorfin let Ragnvald have a third part of the land along with him; for so had Erase, the father of Ragnvald, had it at his dying day. Earl Thorfin was married to Ingebjorg, the earl-mother, who was a daughter of Fin Arnason. Earl Ragnvald thought he should have two-thirds of the land, as Olaf the Saint had promised to his father Bruse, and as Bruse had enjoyed as long as Olaf lived. This was the origin of a great strife between these relations, concerning which we have a long saga. They had a great battle in Pentland Firth, in which Kalf Arnason was with Earl Thorfin. So says Bjarne Gullbraskald:—

Thy cutters, dashing through the tide,
Brought aid to Earl Thorfin's side,
Fin's son-in-law, and people say
Thy aid made Bruse's son give way.

Kalf, thou art fond of warlike toil,
 Gay in the strife and bloody broil;
 But here 'twas hate made thee contend
 Against Earl Ragnvald, the king's friend.

38. OF KING MAGNUS'S LETTER TO ENGLAND.

King Magnus ruled then both over Denmark and Norway; and when he had got possession of the Danish dominions he sent ambassadors over to England to King Edward, who brought to him King Magnus's letter and seal. And in this letter there stood, along with a salutation from King Magnus, these words:—"Ye must have heard of the agreement which I and Hardaknut made,—that he of us two who survived the other should have all the land and people which the deceased had possessed. Now it has so turned out, as ye have no doubt heard, that I have taken the Danish dominions as my heritage after Hardaknut. But before he departed this life he had England as well as Denmark; therefore I consider myself now, in consequence of my rights by this agreement, to own England also. Now I will therefore that thou deliver to me the kingdom; otherwise I will seek to take it by arms, both from Denmark and Norway; and let him rule the land to whom fate gives the victory."

39. KING EDWARD'S ANSWER TO KING MAGNUS'S LETTER.

Now when King Edward had read this letter, he replied thus: "It is known to all men in this country that King Ethelred, my father, was udal-born to this kingdom, both after the old and new law of inheritance. We were four sons after him; and when he by death left the throne my brother Edmund took the government and kingdom; for he was the oldest of us brothers, and I was well satisfied that it was so. And after him my stepfather, Canute the Great, took the kingdom, and as long as he lived there was no access to it. After him my brother Harald was king as long as he lived; and after him my brother Hardaknut took the kingdoms both of Denmark and England; for he thought that a just brotherly division that he should have both England and Denmark, and that I should have no kingdom at all. Now he died, and then it was the resolution of all the people of the country to take me for king here in England. So long as I had no kingly title I served only superiors in all respects, like those who had no claims by birth to land or kingdom. Now, however, I have received the kingly title, and am consecrated king. I have established my royal dignity and authority, as my father before me; and while I live I will not renounce my title. If King Magnus come here with an army, I will gather no army against him; but he shall only get the opportunity of taking England when he has taken my life. Tell him these words of mine." The ambassadors went back to King Magnus, and told him the answer to their message. King Magnus reflected a while, and answered thus: "I think it wisest, and will succeed best, to let King Edward have his kingdom in peace for me, and that I keep the kingdoms God has put into my hands."

SAGA OF HARALD HARDRADE.

1. HARALD ESCAPES FROM THE BATTLE OF STIKLESTAD.

Harald, son of Sigurd Syr, brother of Olaf the Saint, by the same mother, was at the battle of Stiklestad, and was fifteen years old when King Olaf the Saint fell, as was before related. Harald was wounded, and escaped with other fugitives. So says Thiodolf:—

At Haug the fire-sparks from his shield
 Flew round the king's head on the field,
 As blow for blow, for Olaf's sake,
 His sword and shield would give and take.
 Bulgaria's conqueror, I ween,
 Had scarcely fifteen winters seen,
 When from his murdered brother's side
 His unhelmed head he had to hide.

Ragnvald Brusason led Harald from the battle, and the night after the fray took him to a bonde who dwelt in a forest far from other people. The peasant received Harald, and kept him concealed; and Harald was waited upon until he was quite cured of his

wounds. Then the bonde's son attended him on the way east over the ridge of the land, and they went by all the forest paths they could, avoiding the common road. The bonde's son did not know who it was he was attending; and as they were riding together between two uninhabited forests, Harald made these verses:

My wounds were bleeding as I rode;
 And down below the bondes strode,
 Killing the wounded with the sword,
 The followers of their rightful lord.
 From wood to wood I crept along,
 Unnoticed by the bonde-throng;
 'Who knows,' I thought, 'a day may come
 My name will yet be great at home.'

He went eastward over the ridge through Jamtaland and Helsingjaland, and came to Svithjod, where he found Ragnvald Brusason, and many others of King Olaf's men who had fled from the battle at Stiklestad, and they remained there till winter was over.

2. HARALD'S JOURNEY TO CONSTANTINOPLE.

The spring after (A.D. 1031) Harald and Ragnvald got ships, and went east in summer to Russia to King Jarisleif, and were with him all the following winter. So says the skald Bolverk:—

The king's sharp sword lies clean and bright,
 Prepared in foreign lands to fight:
 Our ravens croak to have their fill,
 The wolf howls from the distant hill.
 Our brave king is to Russia gone,—
 Braver than he on earth there's none;
 His sharp sword will carve many feast
 To wolf and raven in the East.

King Jarisleif gave Harald and Ragnvald a kind reception, and made Harald and Ellif, the son of Earl Ragnvald, chiefs over the land-defence men of the king. So says Thiodolf:—

Where Ellif was, one heart and hand
 The two chiefs had in their command;
 In wedge or line their battle order
 Was ranged by both without disorder.
 The eastern Vindland men they drove
 Into a corner; and they move
 The Lesians, although ill at ease,
 To take the laws their conquerors please.

Harald remained several years in Russia, and travelled far and wide in the Eastern land. Then he began his expedition out to Greece, and had a great suite of men with him; and on he went to Constantinople. So says Bolverk:—

Before the cold sea-curling blast
 The cutter from the land flew past,
 Her black yards swinging to and fro,
 Her shield-hung gunwale dipping low.
 The king saw glancing o'er the bow
 Constantinople's metal glow
 From tower and roof, and painted sails
 Gliding past towns and wooded vales.

3. OF HARALD.

At that time the Greek empire was ruled by the Empress Zoe the Great, and with her Michael Catalactus. Now when Harald came to Constantinople he presented himself to the empress, and went into her pay; and immediately, in autumn, went on board the galleys manned with troops which went out to the Greek sea. Harald had his own men along with him. Now Harald had been but a short time in the army before all the Varings flocked to him, and they all joined together when there was a battle. It thus came to pass that Harald was made chief of the Varings. There was a chief over all the troops who was called Gyrger, and who was a relation of the empress. Gyrger and Harald went round among all the Greek islands, and fought much against the corsairs.

4. OF HARALD AND GYRGER CASTING LOTS.

It happened once that Gyrger and the Varings were going through the country, and they resolved to take their night quarters in a wood; and as the Varings came first to the ground, they chose the place which was best for pitching their tents upon, which was the

highest ground; for it is the nature of the land there to be soft when rain falls, and therefore it is bad to choose a low situation for your tents. Now when Gyrger, the chief of the army, came up, and saw where the Varings had set up their tents, he told them to remove, and pitch their tents elsewhere, saying he would himself pitch his tents on their ground. Harald replies, "If ye come first to the night quarter, ye take up your ground, and we must go pitch our tents at some other place where we best can. Now do ye so, in the same way, and find a place where ye will. It is, I think, the privilege of us Varings here in the dominions of the Greek emperor to be free, and independent of all but their own commanders, and bound only to serve the emperor and empress." They disputed long and hotly about this, and both sides armed themselves, and were on the way to fight for it; but men of understanding came between and separated them. They said it would be better to come to an agreement about such questions, so that in future no dispute could arise. It came thus to an arbitration between them, at which the best and most sagacious men should give their judgment in the case. At this arbitration it was determined, with the consent of all parties, that lots should be thrown into a box, and the Greeks and Varings should draw which was first to ride, or to row, or to take place in a harbour, or to choose tent ground; and each side should be satisfied with what the drawing of the lots gave them. Accordingly the lots were made and marked. Harald said to Gyrger, "Let me see what mark thou hast put upon thy lot, that we may not both mark our lots in the same way." He did so. Then Harald marked his lot, and put it into the box along with the other. The man who was to draw out the lots then took up one of the lots between his fingers, held it up in the air, and said, "This lot shall be the first to ride, and to row, and to take place in harbour and on the tent field." Harald seized his band, snatched the die, and threw it into the sea, and called out, "That was our lot!" Gyrger said, "Why did you not let other people see it?" Harald replies, "Look at the one remaining in the box,—there you see your own mark upon it." Accordingly the lot which was left behind was examined, and all men saw that Gyrger's mark was upon it, and accordingly the judgment was given that the Varings had gained the first choice in all they had been quarrelling about. There were many things they quarrelled about, but the end always was that Harald got his own way.

5. HARALD'S EXPEDITION IN THE LAND OF THE SARACENS (SERKLAND).

They went out all on a campaign in summer. When the whole army was thus assembled Harald kept his men out of the battle, or wherever he saw the least danger, under pretext of saving his men; but where he was alone with his own men only, he fought so desperately that they must either come off victorious or die. It thus happened often that when he commanded the army he gained victories, while Gyrger could do nothing. The troops observed this, and insisted they would be more successful if Harald alone was chief of the whole army, and upbraided the general with never effecting anything, neither himself, nor his people. Gyrger again said that the Varings would give him no assistance, and ordered Harald to go with his men somewhere else, and he, with the rest of his army, would win what they could. Harald accordingly left the army with the Varings and the Latin men, and Gyrger on his side went off with the Greek troops. Then it was seen what each could do. Harald always gained victories and booty; but the Greeks went home to Constantinople with their army, all except a few brave men, who, to gain booty and money, joined themselves to Harald, and took him for their leader. He then went with his troops westward to Africa, which the Varings call Serkland, where he was strengthened with many men. In Serkland he took eighty castles, some of which surrendered, and others were stormed. He then went to Sicily. So says Thiodolf:—

The serpent's bed of glowing gold
He hates—the generous king, the bold!
He who four score towers laid low,
Ta'en from the Saracenic foe.
Before upon Sicilian plains,
Shield joined to shield, the fight he gains,
The victory at Hild's war game;
And now the heathens dread his name.

So says also Illuge Bryndala-skald:—

For Michael's empire Harald fought,
And southern lands to Michael brought;
So Budle's son his friendship showed
When he brought friends to his abode.

Here it is said that Michael was king of the Greeks at that time. Harald remained many years in Africa, where he gathered great wealth in gold, jewels, and all sorts of precious things; and all the wealth he gathered there which he did not need for his expenses, he sent with trusty men of his own north to Novgorod to King Jarisleif's care and keeping. He gathered together there extraordinary treasure, as is reasonable to suppose; for he had the plundering of the part of the world richest in gold and valuable things, and he had done such great deeds as with truth are related, such as taking eighty strongholds by his valour.

6. BATTLE IN SICILY.

Now when Harald came to Sicily he plundered there also, and sat down with his army before a strong and populous castle. He surrounded the castle; but the walls were so thick there was no possibility of breaking into it, and the people of the castle had enough of provisions, and all that was necessary for defence. Then Harald hit upon an expedient. He made his bird-catchers catch the small birds which had their nests within the castle, but flew into the woods by day to get food for their young. He had small splinters of tarred wood bound upon the backs of the birds, smeared these over with wax and sulphur, and set fire to them. As soon as the birds were let loose they all flew at once to the castle to their young, and to their nests, which they had under the house roofs that were covered with reeds or straw. The fire from the birds seized upon the house roofs; and although each bird could only carry a small burden of fire, yet all at once there was a mighty flame, caused by so many birds carrying fire with them and spreading it widely among the house roofs. Thus one house after the other was set on fire, until the castle itself was in flames. Then the people came out of the castle and begged for mercy; the same men who for many days had set at defiance the Greek army and its leader. Harald granted life and safety to all who asked quarter, and made himself master of the place.

7. BATTLE AT ANOTHER CASTLE.

There was another castle before which Harald had come with his army. This castle was both full of people and so strong, that there was no hope of breaking into it. The castle stood upon a flat hard plain. Then Harald undertook to dig a passage from a place where a stream ran in a bed so deep that it could not be seen from the castle. They threw out all the earth into the stream, to be carried away by the water. At this work they laboured day and night, and relieved each other in gangs; while the rest of the army went the whole day against the castle, where the castle people shot through their loop-holes. They shot at each other all day in this way, and at night they slept on both sides. Now when Harald perceived that his underground passage was so long that it must be within the castle walls, he ordered his people to arm themselves. It was towards daybreak that they went into the passage. When they got to the end of it they dug over their heads until they came upon stones laid in lime which was the floor of a stone hall. They broke open the floor and rose into the hall. There sat many of the castle-men eating and drinking, and not in the least expecting such uninvited wolves; for the Varings instantly attacked them sword in hand, and killed some, and those who could get away fled. The Varings pursued them; and some seized the castle gate, and opened it, so that the whole body of the army got in. The people of the castle fled; but many asked quarter from the troops, which was granted to all who surrendered. In this way Harald got possession of the place, and found an immense booty in it.

8. BATTLE AT A THIRD CASTLE.

They came to a third castle, the greatest and strongest of them all, and also the richest in property and the fullest of people. Around this castle there were great ditches, so that it evidently could not be taken by the same device as the former; and they lay a long time

before it without doing anything. When the castle-men saw this they became bolder, drew up their array on the castle walls, threw open the castle gates, and shouted to the Varings, urging them, and jeering at them, and telling them to come into the castle, and that they were no more fit for battle than so many poultry. Harald told his men to make as if they did not know what to do, or did not understand what was said. "For," says he, "if we do make an assault we can effect nothing, as they can throw their weapons under their feet among us; and if we get in the castle with a party of our people, they have it in their power to shut them in. and shut out the others; for they have all the castle gates beset with men. We shall therefore show them the same scorn they show us, and let them see we do not fear them. Our men shall go out upon the plain nearest to the castle; taking care, however, to keep out of bow-shot. All our men shall go unarmed, and be playing with each other, so that the castle-men may see we do not regard them or their array." Thus it went on for some days, without anything being done.

9. OF ULF AND HALDOR.

Two Iceland men were then with Harald; the one was Haldor, a son of the gode Snorre, who brought this account to Iceland; the other was Ulf Uspakson, a grandson of Usvifer Spake. Both were very strong men, bold under arms, and Harald's best friends; and both were in this play. Now when some days were passed the castle people showed more courage, and would go without weapons upon the castle wall, while the castle gates were standing open. The Varings observing this, went one day to their sports with the sword under their cloaks, and the helmet under their hats. After playing awhile they observed that the castle people were off their guard; and instantly seizing their weapons, they made at the castle gate. When the men of the castle saw this they went against them armed completely, and a battle began in the castle gate. The Varings had no shields, but wrapped their cloaks round their left arms. Some of them were wounded, some killed, and all stood in great danger. Now came Harald with the men who had remained in the camp, to the assistance of his people; and the castle-men had now got out upon the walls, from which they shot and threw stones down upon them; so that there was a severe battle, and those who were in the castle gates thought that help was brought them slower than they could have wished. When Harald came to the castle gate his standard-bearer fell, and Harald said to Haldor, "Do thou take up the banner now." Haldor took up the banner, and said foolishly, "Who will carry the banner before thee, if thou followest it so timidly as thou hast done for a while?" But these were words more of anger than of truth; for Harald was one of the boldest of men under arms. Then they pressed in, and had a hard battle in the castle; and the end was that Harald gained the victory and took the castle. Haldor was much wounded in the face, and it gave him great pain as long as he lived.

10. BATTLE AT A FOURTH CASTLE.

The fourth castle which Harald came to was the greatest of all we have been speaking about. It was so strong that there was no possibility of breaking into it. They surrounded the castle, so that no supplies could get into it. When they had remained here a short time Harald fell sick, and he betook himself to his bed. He had his tent put up a little from the camp, for he found quietness and rest out of the clamour and clang of armed men. His men went usually in companies to or from him to hear his orders; and the castle people observing there was something new among the Varings, sent out spies to discover what this might mean. When the spies came back to the castle they had to tell of the illness of the commander of the Varings, and that no assault on that account had been made on the castle. A while after Harald's strength began to fail, at which his men were very melancholy and cast down; all which was news to the castle-men. At last Harald's sickness increased so rapidly that his death was expected through all the army. Thereafter the Varings went to the castle-men; told them, in a parley, of the death of their commander; and begged of the priests to grant him burial in the castle. When the castle people heard this news, there were many among them who ruled over

cloisters or other great establishments within the place, and who were very eager to get the corpse for their church, knowing that upon that there would follow very rich presents. A great many priests, therefore, clothed themselves in all their robes, and went out of the castle with cross and shrine and relics and formed a beautiful procession. The Varings also made a great burial. The coffin was borne high in the air, and over it was a tent of costly linen and before it were carried many banners. Now when the corpse was brought within the castle gate the Varings set down the coffin right across the entry, fixed a bar to keep the gates open, and sounded to battle with all their trumpets, and drew their swords. The whole army of the Varings, fully armed, rushed from the camp to the assault of the castle with shout and cry; and the monks and other priests who had gone to meet the corpse and had striven with each other who should be the first to come out and take the offering at the burial, were now striving much more who should first get away from the Varings; for they killed before their feet every one who was nearest, whether clerk or unconsecrated. The Varings rummaged so well this castle that they killed all the men, pillaged everything and made an enormous booty.

11. OF HARALD.

Harald was many years in these campaigns, both in Serkland and in Sicily. Then he came back to Constantinople with his troops and stayed there but a little time before he began his expedition to Jerusalem. There he left the pay he had received from the Greek emperor and all the Varings who accompanied him did the same. It is said that on all these expeditions Harald had fought eighteen regular battles. So says Thiodolf:—

Harald the Stern ne'er allowed
Peace to his foemen, false and proud;
In eighteen battles, fought and won,
The valour of the Norseman shone.
The king, before his home return,
Oft dyed the bald head of the erne
With bloody specks, and o'er the waste
The sharp-claw'd wolf his footsteps traced.

12. HARALD'S EXPEDITION TO PALESTINE.

Harald went with his men to the land of Jerusalem and then up to the city of Jerusalem, and wheresoever he came in the land all the towns and strongholds were given up to him. So says the skald Stuf, who had heard the king himself relate these tidings:—

He went, the warrior bold and brave,
Jerusalem, the holy grave,
And the interior of the land,
To bring under the Greeks' command;
And by the terror of his name
Under his power the country came,
Nor needed wasting fire and sword
To yield obedience to his word.

Here it is told that this land came without fire and sword under Harald's command. He then went out to Jordan and bathed therein, according to the custom of other pilgrims. Harald gave great gifts to our Lord's grave, to the Holy Cross, and other holy relics in the land of Jerusalem. He also cleared the whole road all the way out to Jordan, by killing the robbers and other disturbers of the peace. So says the skald Stuf:—

The Agder king cleared far and wide
Jordan's fair banks on either side;
The robber-bands before him fled,
And his great name was widely spread.
The wicked people of the land
Were punished here by his dread hand,
And they hereafter will not miss
Much worse from Jesus Christ than this.

13. HARALD PUT IN PRISON.

Thereafter he went back to Constantinople. When Harald returned to Constantinople from Jerusalem he longed to return to the North to his native land; and when he heard that Magnus Olafson, his brother's son, had become king both of Norway and Denmark, he gave up his command in the Greek service. And when the empress Zoe heard of this she became angry and raised an accusation against Harald that he had misapplied the property of the

Greek emperor which he had received in the campaigns in which he was commander of the army. There was a young and beautiful girl called Maria, a brother's daughter of the empress Zoe, and Harald had paid his addresses to her; but the empress had given him a refusal. The Varings, who were then in pay in Constantinople, have told here in the North that there went a report among well-informed people that the empress Zoe herself wanted Harald for her husband, and that she chiefly blamed Harald for his determination to leave Constantinople, although another reason was given out to the public. Constantinus Monomachus was at that time emperor of the Greeks and ruled along with Zoe. On this account the Greek emperor had Harald made prisoner and carried to prison.

14. KING OLAF'S MIRACLE AND BLINDING THE GREEK EMPEROR.

When Harald drew near to the prison King Olaf the Saint stood before him and said he would assist him. On that spot of the street a chapel has since been built and consecrated to Saint Olaf and which chapel has stood there ever since. The prison was so constructed that there was a high tower open above, but a door below to go into it from the street. Through it Harald was thrust in, along with Haldor and Ulf. Next night a lady of distinction with two servants came, by the help of ladders, to the top of the tower, let down a rope into the prison and hauled them up. Saint Olaf had formerly cured this lady of a sickness and he had appeared to her in a vision and told her to deliver his brother. Harald went immediately to the Varings, who all rose from their seats when he came in and received him with joy. The men armed themselves forthwith and went to where the emperor slept. They took the emperor prisoner and put out both the eyes of him. So says Thorarin Skeggjason in his poem:—

Of glowing gold that decks the hand
The king got plenty in this land;
But it's great emperor in the strife
Was made stone-blind for all his life.

So says Thiodolf, the skald, also:—

He who the hungry wolf's wild yell
Quiets with prey, the stern, the fell,
Midst the uproar of shriek and shout
Stung the Greek emperor's eyes both out:
The Norse king's mark will not adorn,
The Norse king's mark gives cause to mourn;
His mark the Eastern king must bear,
Groping his sightless way in fear.

In these two songs, and many others, it is told that Harald himself blinded the Greek emperor; and they would surely have named some duke, count, or other great man, if they had not known this to be the true account; and King Harald himself and other men who were with him spread the account.

15. HARALD'S JOURNEY FROM CONSTANTINOPLE.

The same night King Harald and his men went to the house where Maria slept and carried her away by force. Then they went down to where the galleys of the Varings lay, took two of them and rowed out into Sjavid sound. When they came to the place where the iron chain is drawn across the sound, Harald told his men to stretch out at their oars in both galleys; but the men who were not rowing to run all to the stern of the galley, each with his luggage in his hand. The galleys thus ran up and lay on the iron chain. As soon as they stood fast on it, and would advance no farther, Harald ordered all the men to run forward into the bow. Then the galley, in which Harald was, balanced forwards and swung down over the chain; but the other, which remained fast athwart the chain, split in two, by which many men were lost; but some were taken up out of the sound. Thus Harald escaped out of Constantinople and sailed thence into the Black Sea; but before he left the land he put the lady ashore and sent her back with a good escort to Constantinople and bade her tell her relation, the Empress Zoe, how little power she had over Harald, and how little the empress could have hindered him from taking the lady. Harald then sailed northwards in the Ellipalta and then all round the Eastern empire. On

this voyage Harald composed sixteen songs for amusement and all ending with the same words. This is one of them:—

Past Sicily's wide plains we flew,
A dauntless, never-wearied crew;
Our viking steed rushed through the sea,
As viking-like fast, fast sailed we.
Never, I think, along this shore
Did Norsemen ever sail before;
Yet to the Russian queen, I fear,
My gold-adorned, I am not dear.

With this he meant Ellisif, daughter of King Jarisleif in Novgorod.

16. OF KING HARALD.

When Harald came to Novgorod King Jarisleif received him in the most friendly way and he remained there all winter (A.D. 1045). Then he took into his own keeping all the gold and the many kinds of precious things which he had sent there from Constantinople and which together made up so vast a treasure that no man in the Northern lands ever saw the like of it in one man's possession. Harald had been three times in the poluta-svarf while he was in Constantinople. It is the custom, namely, there, that every time one of the Greek emperors dies, the Varings are allowed poluta-svarf; that is, they may go through all the emperor's palaces where his treasures are and each may take and keep what he can lay hold of while he is going through them.

17. KING HARALD'S MARRIAGE.

This winter King Jarisleif gave Harald his daughter Elisabeth in marriage. She is called by the Northmen Ellisif. This is related by Stuf the Blind, thus:—

Agder's chief now got the queen
Who long his secret love had been.
Of gold, no doubt, a mighty store
The princess to her husband bore.

In spring he began his journey from Novgorod and came to Aldeigjuborg, where he took shipping and sailed from the East in summer. He turned first to Svithjod and came to Sigtuna. So says Valgard o' Val:—

The fairest cargo ship e'er bore,
From Russia's distant eastern shore
The gallant Harald homeward brings—
Gold, and a fame that skald still sings.
The ship through dashing foam he steers,
Through the sea-rain to Svithjod veers,
And at Sigtuna's grassy shores
His gallant vessel safely moors.

18. THE LEAGUE BETWEEN KING HARALD AND SVEIN ULFSON.

Harald found there before him Svein Ulfson, who the autumn before (A.D. 1045) had fled from King Magnus at Helganes; and when they met they were very friendly on both sides. The Swedish king, Olaf the Swede, was brother of the mother of Ellisif, Harald's wife; and Astrid, the mother of Svein, was King Olaf's sister. Harald and Svein entered into friendship with each other and confirmed it by oath. All the Swedes were friendly to Svein, because he belonged to the greatest family in the country; and thus all the Swedes were Harald's friends and helpers also, for many great men were connected with him by relationship. So says Thiodolf:

Cross the East sea the vessel flew,—
Her oak-keel a white furrow drew
From Russia's coast to Swedish land.
Where Harald can great help command.
The heavy vessel's leeward side
Was hid beneath the rushing tide;
While the broad sail and gold-tipped mast
Swung to and fro in the hard blast.

19. KING HARALD'S FORAY.

Then Harald and Svein fitted out ships and gathered together a great force; and when the troops were ready they sailed from the East towards Denmark. So says Valgard:—

Brave Yngve! to the land decreed
 To thee by fate, with tempest speed
 The winds fly with thee o'er the sea—
 To thy own udal land with thee.
 As past the Scanlan plains they fly,
 The gay ships glances 'twixt sea and sky,
 And Scanian brides look out, and fear
 Some ill to those they hold most dear.

They landed first in Seeland with their men and herried and burned in the land far and wide. Then they went to Fyen, where they also landed and wasted. So says Valgard:—

Harald! thou hast the isle laid waste,
 The Seeland men away hast chased,
 And the wild wolf by daylight roams
 Through their deserted silent homes.
 Fiona too could not withstand
 The fury of thy wasting hand.
 Helms burst, shields broke,—Fiona's bounds.
 Were filled with death's terrific sounds.
 "Red flashing in the southern sky,
 The clear flame sweeping broad and high,
 From fair Roeskilde's lofty towers,
 On lowly huts its fire-rain pours;
 And shows the housemates' silent train
 In terror scouring o'er the plain,
 Seeking the forest's deepest glen,
 To house with wolves, and 'scape from men.
 "Few were they of escape to tell,
 For, sorrow-worn, the people fell:
 The only captives form the fray
 Were lovely maidens led away.
 And in wild terror to the strand,
 Down to the ships, the linked band
 Of fair-haired girls is roughly driven,
 Their soft skins by the irons riven.

20. KING MAGNUS'S LEVY.

King Magnus Olafson sailed north to Norway in the autumn after the battle at Helganes (A.D. 1045). There he hears the news that Harald Sigurdson, his relation, was come to Svithjod; and moreover that Svein Ulfson and Harald had entered into a friendly bond with each other and gathered together a great force, intending first to subdue Denmark and then Norway. King Magnus then ordered a general levy over all Norway and he soon collected a great army. He hears then that Harald and Svein were come to Denmark and were burning and laying waste the land and that the country people were everywhere submitting to them. It was also told that King Harald was stronger and stouter than other men, and so wise withal that nothing was impossible to him, and he had always the victory when he fought a battle; and he was also so rich in gold that no man could compare with him in wealth. Thiodolf speaks thus of it:

Norsemen, who stand the sword of foe
 Like forest-stems unmoved by blow!
 My hopes are fled, no peace is near,—
 People fly here and there in fear.
 On either side of Seeland's coast
 A fleet appears—a white winged host;
 Magnus form Norway takes his course,
 Harald from Sweden leads his force.

21. TREATY BETWEEN HARALD AND MAGNUS.

Those of Harald's men who were in his counsel said that it would be a great misfortune if relations like Harald and Magnus should fight and throw a death-spear against each other; and therefore many offered to attempt bringing about some agreement between them, and the kings, by their persuasion, agreed to it. Thereupon some men were sent off in a light boat, in which they sailed south in all haste to Denmark, and got some Danish men, who were proven friends of King Magnus, to propose this matter to Harald. This affair was conducted very secretly. Now when Harald heard that his relation, King Magnus, would offer him a league and partition, so that Harald should have half of Norway with King Magnus, and that they should divide all their movable property into two equal parts, he accepted the proposal, and the people went back to King Magnus with this answer.

22. TREATY BETWEEN HARALD AND SVEIN BROKEN.

A little after this it happened that Harald and Svein one evening were sitting at table drinking and talking together, and Svein asked Harald what valuable piece of all his property he esteemed the most.

He answered, it was his banner Land-waster.

Svein asked what was there remarkable about it, that he valued it so highly.

Harald replied, it was a common saying that he must gain the victory before whom that banner is borne, and it had turned out so ever since he had owned it.

Svein replies, "I will begin to believe there is such virtue in the banner when thou hast held three battles with thy relation Magnus, and hast gained them all."

Then answered Harald with an angry voice, "I know my relationship to King Magnus, without thy reminding me of it; and although we are now going in arms against him, our meeting may be of a better sort."

Svein changed colour, and said, "There are people, Harald, who say that thou hast done as much before as only to hold that part of an agreement which appears to suit thy own interest best."

Harald answers, "It becomes thee ill to say that I have not stood by an agreement, when I know what King Magnus could tell of thy proceedings with him."

Thereupon each went his own way. At night, when Harald went to sleep within the bulwarks of his vessel, he said to his footboy, "I will not sleep in my bed to-night, for I suspect there may be treachery abroad. I observed this evening that my friend Svein was very angry at my free discourse. Thou shalt keep watch, therefore, in case anything happen in the night." Harald then went away to sleep somewhere else, and laid a billet of wood in his place. At midnight a boat rowed alongside to the ship's bulwark; a man went on board, lifted up the cloth of the tent of the bulwarks, went up, and struck in Harald's bed with a great ax, so that it stood fast in the lump of wood. The man instantly ran back to his boat again, and rowed away in the dark night, for the moon was set; but the axe remained sticking in the piece of wood as an evidence. Thereupon Harald waked his men and let them know the treachery intended. "We can now see sufficiently," said he, "that we could never match Svein if he practises such deliberate treachery against us; so it will be best for us to get away from this place while we can. Let us cast loose our vessel and row away as quietly as possible." They did so, and rowed during the night northwards along the land; and then proceeded night and day until they came to King Magnus, where he lay with his army. Harald went to his relation Magnus, and there was a joyful meeting betwixt them. So says Thiodolf:—

The far-known king the order gave,
 In silence o'er the swelling wave,
 With noiseless oars, his vessels gay
 From Denmark west to row away;
 And Olaf's son, with justice rare,
 Offers with him the realm to share.
 People, no doubt, rejoiced to find
 The kings had met in peaceful mind.

Afterwards the two relatives conversed with each other and all was settled by peaceful agreement.

23. KING MAGNUS GIVES HARALD HALF OF NORWAY.

King Magnus lay at the shore and had set up tents upon the land. There he invited his relation, King Harald, to be his guest at table; and Harald went to the entertainment with sixty of his men and was feasted excellently. Towards the end of the day King Magnus went into the tent where Harald sat and with him went men carrying parcels consisting of clothes and arms. Then the king went to the man who sat lowest and gave him a good sword, to the next a shield, to the next a kirtle, and so on,—clothes, or weapons, or gold; to all he gave one or the other valuable gift, and the more costly to the more distinguished men among them. Then he placed himself before his relation Harald, holding two sticks in his hand, and said, "Which of these two sticks wilt thou have, my friend?"

Harald replies, "The one nearest me."

"Then," said King Magnus, "with this stick I give thee half of the Norwegian power, with all the scat and duties, and all the domains thereunto belonging, with the condition that everywhere thou shalt be as lawful king in Norway as I am myself; but when we are both together in one place, I shall be the first man in seat, service and salutation; and if there be three of us together of equal dignity, that I shall sit in the middle, and shall have the royal tent-ground and the royal landing-place. Thou shalt strengthen and advance our kingdom, in return for making thee that man in Norway whom we never expected any man should be so long as our head was above ground." Then Harald stood up, and thanked him for the high title and dignity. Thereupon they both sat down, and were very merry together. The same evening Harald and his men returned to their ships.

24. HARALD GIVES MAGNUS THE HALF OF HIS TREASURES.

The following morning King Magnus ordered the trumpets to sound to a General Thing of the people; and when it was seated, he made known to the whole army the gift he had given to his relation Harald. Thorer of Steig gave Harald the title of King there at the Thing; and the same day King Harald invited King Magnus to table with him, and he went with sixty men to King Harald's land-tent, where he had prepared a feast. The two kings sat together on a high-seat, and the feast was splendid; everything went on with magnificence, and the kings' were merry and glad. Towards the close of the day King Harald ordered many caskets to be brought into the tent, and in like manner people bore in weapons, clothes and other sorts of valuables; and all these King Harald divided among King Magnus's men who were at the feast. Then he had the caskets opened and said to King Magnus, "Yesterday you gave us a large kingdom, which your hand won from your and our enemies, and took us in partnership with you, which was well done; and this has cost you much. Now we on our side have been in foreign parts, and oft in peril of life, to gather together the gold which you here see. Now, King Magnus, I will divide this with you. We shall both own this movable property, and each have his equal share of it, as each has his equal half share of Norway. I know that our dispositions are different, as thou art more liberal than I am; therefore let us divide this property equally between us, so that each may have his share free to do with as he will." Then Harald had a large ox-hide spread out, and turned the gold out of the caskets upon it. Then scales and weights were taken and the gold separated and divided by weight into equal parts; and all people wondered exceedingly that so much gold should have come together in one place in the northern countries. But it was understood that it was the Greek emperor's property and wealth; for, as all people say, there are whole houses there full of red gold. The kings were now very merry. Then there appeared an ingot among the rest as big as a man's hand. Harald took it in his hands and said, "Where is the gold, friend Magnus, that thou canst show against this piece?"

King Magnus replied, "So many disturbances and levies have been in the country that almost all the gold and silver I could lay up is gone. I have no more gold in my possession than this ring." And he took the ring off his hand and gave it to Harald.

Harald looked at it, and said, "That is but little gold, friend, for the king who owns two kingdoms; and yet some may doubt whether thou art rightful owner of even this ring."

Then King Magnus replied, after a little reflection, "If I be not rightful owner of this ring, then I know not what I have got right to; for my father, King Olaf the Saint, gave me this ring at our last parting."

Then said King Harald, laughing, "It is true, King Magnus, what thou sayest. Thy father gave thee this ring, but he took the ring from my father for some trifling cause; and in truth it was not a good time for small kings in Norway when thy father was in full power."

King Harald gave Thorer of Steig at that feast a bowl of mountain birch, that was encircled with a silver ring and had a silver handle, both which parts were gilt; and the bowl was filled with

money of pure silver. With that came also two gold rings, which together stood for a mark. He gave him also his cloak of dark purple lined with white skins within, and promised him besides his friendship and great dignity. Thorgils Snorrason, an intelligent man, says he has seen an altar-cloth that was made of this cloak; and Gudrid, a daughter of Guthorm, the son of Thorer of Steig, said, according to Thorgil's account, that she had seen this bowl in her father Guthorm's possession. Bolverk also tells of these matters:—

Thou, generous king, I have been told,
For the green land hast given gold;
And Magnus got a mighty treasure,
That thou one half might'st rule at pleasure.
The people gained a blessed peace,
Which 'twixt the kings did never cease;
While Svein, disturbed with war's alarms,
Had his folk always under arms.

25. OF KING MAGNUS.

The kings Magnus and Harald both ruled in Norway the winter after their agreement (A.D. 1047), and each had his court. In winter they went around the Upland country in guest-quarters; and sometimes they were both together, sometimes each was for himself. They went all the way north to Thronthjem, to the town of Nidaros. King Magnus had taken special care of the holy remains of King Olaf after he came to the country; had the hair and nails clipped every twelve month, and kept himself the keys that opened the shrine. Many miracles were worked by King Olaf's holy remains. It was not long before there was a breach in the good understanding between the two kings, as many were so mischievous as to promote discord between them.

26. OF SVEIN ULFSON.

Svein Ulfson remained behind in the harbour after Harald had gone away, and inquired about his proceedings. When he heard at last of Magnus and Harald having agreed and joined their forces, he steered with his forces eastward along Scania, and remained there until towards winter, when he heard that King Magnus and King Harald had gone northwards to Norway. Then Svein, with his troops, came south to Denmark and took all the royal income that winter (A.D. 1047).

27. OF THE LEVY OF THE TWO KINGS.

Towards spring (A.D. 1047) King Magnus and his relation, King Harald, ordered a levy in Norway. It happened once that the kings lay all night in the same harbour and next day, King Harald, being first ready, made sail. Towards evening he brought up in the harbour in which Magnus and his retinue had intended to pass the night. Harald laid his vessel in the royal ground, and there set up his tents. King Magnus got under sail later in the day and came into the harbour just as King Harald had done pitching his tents. They saw then that King Harald had taken up the king's ground and intended to lie there. After King Magnus had ordered the sails to be taken in, he said, "The men will now get ready along both sides of the vessel to lay out their oars, and some will open the hatches and bring up the arms and arm themselves; for, if they will not make way for us, we will fight them." Now when King Harald sees that King Magnus will give him battle, he says to his men, "Cut our land-fastenings and back the ship out of the ground, for friend Magnus is in a passion." They did so and laid the vessel out of the ground and King Magnus laid his vessel in it. When they were now ready on both sides with their business, King Harald went with a few men on board of King Magnus's ship. King Magnus received him in a friendly way, and bade him welcome. King Harald answered, "I thought we were come among friends; but just now I was in doubt if ye would have it so. But it is a truth that childhood is hasty, and I will only consider it as a childish freak." Then said King Magnus, "It is no childish whim, but a trait of my family, that I never forget what I have given, or what I have not given. If this trifle had been settled against my will, there would soon have followed some other discord like it. In all particulars I will hold the agreement between us; but in the same way we will have all that belongs to us by that right." King Harald coolly replied, that it is an old custom for the wisest to

give way; and returned to his ship. From such circumstances it was found difficult to preserve good understanding between the kings. King Magnus's men said he was in the right; but others, less wise, thought there was some slight put upon Harald in the business. King Harald's men, besides, insisted that the agreement was only that King Magnus should have the preference of the harbour-ground when they arrived together, but that King Harald was not bound to draw out of his place when he came first. They observed, also, that King Harald had conducted himself well and wisely in the matter. Those who viewed the business in the worst light insisted that King Magnus wanted to break the agreement, and that he had done King Harald injustice, and put an affront on him. Such disputes were talked over so long among foolish people, that the spirit of disagreeing affected the kings themselves. Many other things also occurred, in which the kings appeared determined to have each his own way; but of these little will be set down here.

28. KING MAGNUS THE GOOD'S DEATH.

The kings, Magnus and Harald, sailed with their fleet south to Denmark; and when Svein heard of their approach, he fled away east to Scania. Magnus and Harald remained in Denmark late in summer, and subdued the whole country. In autumn they were in Jutland. One night, as King Magnus lay in his bed, it appeared to him in a dream that he was in the same place as his father, Saint Olaf, and that he spoke to him thus: "Wilt thou choose, my son, to follow me, or to become a mighty king, and have long life; but to commit a crime which thou wilt never be able to expiate?" He thought he made the answer, "Do thou, father, choose for me." Then the king thought the answer was, "Thou shalt follow me." King Magnus told his men this dream. Soon after he fell sick and lay at a place called Sudathorþ. When he was near his death he sent his brother, Thorer, with tokens to Svein Ulfson, with the request to give Thorer the aid he might require. In this message King Magnus also gave the Danish dominions to Svein after his death; and said it was just that Harald should rule over Norway and Svein over Denmark. Then King Magnus the Good died (A.D. 1047), and great was the sorrow of all the people at his death. So says Od Kikinaskald:—

The tears o'er good King Magnus' bier,
The people's tears, were all sincere:
Even they to whom he riches gave
Carried him heavily to the grave.
All hearts were struck at the king's end;
His house-thralls wept as for a friend;
His court-men oft alone would muse,
As pondering o'er unthought of news.

29. KING MAGNUS'S FUNERAL.

After this event King Harald held a Thing of his men-at-arms, and told them his intention to go with the army to Viborg Thing, and make himself be proclaimed king over the whole Danish dominions, to which, he said, he had hereditary right after his relation Magnus, as well as to Norway. He therefore asked his men for their aid, and said he thought the Norway man should show himself always superior to the Dane. Then Einar Tambaskelfer replies that he considered it a greater duty to bring his foster-son King Magnus's corpse to the grave, and lay it beside his father, King Olaf's, north in Throndhjem town, than to be fighting abroad and taking another king's dominions and property. He ended his speech with saying that he would rather follow King Magnus dead than any other king alive. Thereupon he had the body adorned in the most careful way, so that most magnificent preparations were made in the king's ship. Then all the Throndhjem people and all the Northmen made themselves ready to return home with the king's body, and so the army was broken up. King Harald saw then that it was better for him to return to Norway to secure that kingdom first, and to assemble men anew; and so King Harald returned to Norway with all his army. As soon as he came to Norway he held a Thing with the people of the country, and had himself proclaimed king everywhere. He proceeded thus from the East through Viken, and in every district in Norway he was named king. Einar Tambaskelfer, and with him all the Throndhjem troops, went with King Magnus's body and transported it to the town of Nidaros, where it was buried in St. Clement's church,

where also was the shrine of King Olaf the Saint. King Magnus was of middle size, of long and clear-complexioned countenance, and light hair, spoke well and hastily, was brisk in his actions, and extremely generous. He was a great warrior, and remarkably bold in arms. He was the most popular of kings, prized even by enemies as well as friends.

30. OF SVEIN ULFSON.

Svein Ulfson remained that autumn in Scania (A.D. 1047), and was making ready to travel eastward to Sweden, with the intention of renouncing the title of king he had assumed in Denmark; but just as he was mounting his horse some men came riding to him with the first news that King Magnus was dead, and all the Northmen had left Denmark. Svein answered in haste, "I call God to witness that I shall never again fly from the Danish dominions as long as I live." Then he got on his horse and rode south into Scania, where immediately many people crowded to him. That winter he brought under his power all the Danish dominions, and all the Danes took him for their king. Thorer, King Magnus's brother, came to Svein in autumn with the message of King Magnus, as before related, and was well received; and Thorer remained long with Svein and was well taken care of.

31. OF KING HARALD SIGURDSON.

King Harald Sigurdson took the royal power over all Norway after the death of King Magnus Olafson; and when he had reigned over Norway one winter and spring was come (A.D. 1048), he ordered a levy through all the land of one-half of all men and ships and went south to Jutland. He hurried and burned all summer wide around in the land and came into Godnarfjord, where King Harald made these verses:—

While wives of husbands fondly dream,
Here let us anchor in the stream,
In Godnarfjord; we'll safely moor
Our sea-homes, and sleep quite secure.

Then he spoke to Thiodolf, the skald, and asked him to add to it what it wanted, and he sang:—

In the next summer, I foresee,
Our anchorage in the South will be;
To hold our sea-homes on the ground,
More cold-tongued anchors will be found.

To this Bolverk alludes in his song also, that Harald went to Denmark the summer after King Magnus's death. Bolverk sings thus:—

Next summer thou the levy raised,
And seawards all the people gazed,
Where thy sea-steeds in sunshine glancing
Over the waves were gaily prancing;
While the deep ships that plunder bore
Seemed black specks from the distant shore.
The Danes, from banks or hillocks green,
Looked with dismay upon the scene.

32. OF THORKEL GEYSA'S DAUGHTERS.

Then they burned the house of Thorkel Geysa, who was a great lord, and his daughters they carried off bound to their ships. They had made a great mockery the winter before of King Harald's coming with war-ships against Denmark; and they cut their cheese into the shape of anchors, and said such anchors might hold all the ships of the Norway king. Then this was composed:—

The Island-girls, we were told,
Made anchors all our fleet to hold:
Their Danish jest cut out in cheese
Did not our stern king's fancy please.
Now many a maiden fair, may be,
Sees iron anchors splash the sea,
Who will not wake a maid next morn
To laugh at Norway's ships in scorn.

It is said that a spy who had seen the fleet of King Harald said to Thorkel Geysa's daughters, "Ye said, Geysa's daughters, that King Harald dared not come to Denmark." Dotta, Thorkel's daughter, replied, "That was yesterday." Thorkel had to ransom his daughters with a great sum. So says Grane:—

The gold-adorned girl's eye
Through Hornskeg wood was never dry,
As down towards the sandy shore
The men their lovely prizes bore.
The Norway leader kept at bay
The foe who would contest the way,
And Dotta's father had to bring
Treasure to satisfy the king.

King Harald plundered in Denmark all that summer, and made immense booty; but he had not any footing in the land that summer in Denmark. He went to Norway again in autumn and remained there all winter (A.D. 1049).

33. MARRIAGES AND CHILDREN OF HARALD HARTRADE.

The winter after King Magnus the Good died, King Harald took Thora, daughter of Thorberg Arnason, and they had two sons; the oldest called Magnus, and the other Olaf. King Harald and Queen Ellisif had two daughters; the one Maria, the other Ingegerd. The spring after the foray which has just been related King Harald ordered the people out and went with them to Denmark (A.D. 1049), and herried there, and did so summer after summer thereafter. So says Stuf, the skald:—

Falster lay waste, as people tell,—
The raven in other isles fared well.
The Danes were everywhere in fear,
For the dread foray every year.

34. OF THE ARMAMENTS OF SVEIN ULFSON AND HARALD.

King Svein ruled over all the Danish dominions after King Magnus's death. He sat quiet all the winter; but in summer he lay out in his ships with all his people and it was said he would go north to Norway with the Danish army and make not less havoc there than King Harald had made in Denmark. King Svein proposed to King Harald in winter (A.D. 1049) to meet him the following summer at the Gaut river and fight until in the battle-field their differences were ended, or they were settled peacefully. They made ready on both sides all winter with their ships, and called out in summer one-half of all the fighting men. The same summer came Thorleik the Fair out of Iceland, and composed a poem about King Svein Ulfson. He heard, when he arrived in Norway, that King Harald had sailed south to the Gaut river against King Svein. Then Thorleik sang this:—

The wily Svein, I think, will meet
These inland Norsemen fleet to fleet;
The arrow-storm, and heaving sea,
His vantage-fight and field will be.
God only knows the end of strife,
Or which shall have his land and life;
This strife must come to such an end,
For terms will never bind King Svein.

He also sang these verses:—

Harald, whose red shield oft has shone
O'er herried coasts, and fields hard won,
Rides in hot wrath, and eager speeds
O'er the blue waves his ocean-steeds.
Svein, who in blood his arrows stains,
Brings o'er the ocean's heaving plains
His gold-beaked ships, which come in view
Out from the Sound with many a hue.

King Harald came with his forces to the appointed meeting-place; but there he heard that King Svein was lying with his fleet at the south side of Seeland. Then King Harald divided his forces; let the greater part of the bonde-troops return home; and took with him his court-men, his lendermen, the best men-at-arms, and all the bonde-troops who lived nearest to the Danish land. They sailed over to Jutland to the south of Vendilskage, and so south to Thioda; and over all they carried fire and sword. So says Stuf, the skald:—

In haste the men of Thyland fly
From the great monarch's threat'ning eye;
At the stern Harald's angry look
The boldest hearts in Denmark shook.

They went forward all the way south to Heidaby, took the merchant town and burnt it. Then one of Harald's men made the following verses:—

All Heidaby is burned down!
Strangers will ask where stood the town.
In our wild humour up it blazed,
And Svein looks round him all amazed.
All Heidaby is burned down!
From a far corner of the town
I saw, before the peep of morning,
Roofs, walls, and all in flame high burning.

To this also Thorleik alludes in his verses, when he heard there had been no battle at the Gaut river:—

The stranger-warrior may inquire
Of Harald's men, why in his ire
On Heidaby his wrath he turns,
And the fair town to ashes burns?
Would that the day had never come
When Harald's ships returned home
From the East Sea, since now the town,
Without his gain, is burned down!

35. HARALD'S ESCAPE INTO THE JUTLAND SEA.

Then King Harald sailed north and had sixty ships and the most of them large and heavily laden with the booty taken in summer; and as they sailed north past Thioda King Svein came down from the land with a great force and he challenged King Harald to land and fight. King Harald had little more than half the force of King Svein and therefore he challenged Svein to fight at sea. So says Thorleik the Fair:—

Svein, who of all men under heaven
Has had the luckiest birth-hour given,
Invites his foemen to the field,
There to contest with blood-stained shield.
The king, impatient of delay,
Harald, will with his sea-hawks stay;
On board will fight, and fate decide
If Svein shall by his land abide.

After that King Harald sailed north along Vendilskage; and the wind then came against them, and they brought up under Hlesey, where they lay all night. A thick fog lay upon the sea; and when the morning came and the sun rose they saw upon the other side of the sea as if many lights were burning. This was told to King Harald; and he looked at it, and said immediately, "Strike the tilts down on the ships and take to the oars. The Danish forces are coming upon us, and the fog there where they are must have cleared off, and the sun shines upon the dragon-heads of their ships, which are gilded, and that is what we see." It was so as he had said. Svein had come there with a prodigious armed force. They rowed now on both sides all they could. The Danish ships flew lighter before the oars; for the Northmen's ships were both soaked with water and heavily laden, so that the Danes approached nearer and nearer. Then Harald, whose own dragon-ship was the last of the fleet, saw that he could not get away; so he ordered his men to throw overboard some wood, and lay upon it clothes and other good and valuable articles; and it was so perfectly calm that these drove about with the tide. Now when the Danes saw their own goods driving about on the sea, they who were in advance turned about to save them; for they thought it was easier to take what was floating freely about, than to go on board the Northmen to take it. They dropped rowing and lost ground. Now when King Svein came up to them with his ship, he urged them on, saying it would be a great shame if they, with so great a force, could not overtake and master so small a number. The Danes then began again to stretch out lustily at their oars. When King Harald saw that the Danish ships went faster he ordered his men to lighten their ships, and cast overboard malt, wheat, bacon, and to let their liquor run out, which helped a little. Then Harald ordered the bulwarkscreens, the empty casks and puncheons and the prisoners to be thrown overboard; and when all these were driving about on the sea, Svein ordered help to be given to save the men. This was done; but so much time was lost that they separated from each other. The Danes turned back and the Northmen proceeded on their way. So says Thorleik the Fair:—

Svein drove his foes from Jutland's coast,—
 The Norsemen's ships would have been lost,
 But Harald all his vessels saves,
 Throwing his booty on the waves.
 The Jutlanders saw, as he threw,
 Their own goods floating in their view;
 His lightened ships fly o'er the main
 While they pick up their own again.

King Svein returned southwards with his ships to Hlesey, where he found seven ships of the Northmen, with bondes and men of the levy. When King Svein came to them they begged for mercy, and offered ransom for themselves. So says Thorleik the Fair:—

The stern king's men good offers make,
 If Svein will ransom for them take;
 Too few to fight, they boldly say
 Unequal force makes them give way.
 The hasty bondes for a word
 Would have betaken them to the sword,
 And have prolonged a bloody strife—
 Such men can give no price for life.

36. OF HARALD.

King Harald was a great man, who ruled his kingdom well in home-concerns. Very prudent was he, of good understanding; and it is the universal opinion that no chief ever was in northern lands of such deep judgment and ready counsel as Harald. He was a great warrior; bold in arms; strong and expert in the use of his weapons beyond any others, as has been before related, although many of the feats of his manhood are not here written down. This is owing partly to our uncertainty about them, partly to our wish not to put stories into this book for which there is no testimony. Although we have heard, many things talked about, and even circumstantially related, yet we think it better that something may be added to, than that it should be necessary to take something away from our narrative. A great part of his history is put in verse by Iceland men, which poems they presented to him or his sons, and for which reason he was their great friend. He was, indeed, a great friend to all the people of that country; and once, when a very dear time set in, he allowed four ships to transport meal to Iceland, and fixed that the shippund should not be dearer than 100 ells of wadmál. He permitted also all poor people, who could find provisions to keep them on the voyage across the sea, to emigrate from Iceland to Norway; and from that time there was better subsistence in the country, and the seasons also turned out better. King Harald also sent from Norway a bell for the church of which Olaf the Saint had sent the timbers to Iceland, and which was erected on the Thing-plain. Such remembrances of King Harald are found here in the country, besides many great gifts which he presented to those who visited him.

37. OF HALDOR SNORRASON.

Haldor Snorrason and Ulf Uspakson, as before related, came to Norway with King Harald. They were, in many respects, of different dispositions. Haldor was very stout and strong, and remarkably handsome in appearance. King Harald gave him this testimony, that he, among all his men, cared least about doubtful circumstances, whether they betokened danger or pleasure; for, whatever turned up, he was never in higher nor in lower spirits, never slept less nor more on account of them, nor ate or drank but according to his custom. Haldor was not a man of many words, but short in conversation, told his opinion bluntly and was obstinate and hard; and this could not please the king, who had many clever people about him zealous in his service. Haldor remained a short time with the king; and then came to Iceland, where he took up his abode in Hjardarholt, and dwelt in that farm to a very advanced age.

38. OF ULF USPAKSON.

Ulf Uspakson stood in great esteem with King Harald; for he was a man of great understanding, clever in conversation, active and brave, and withal true and sincere. King Harald made Ulf his marshal, and married him to Jorun, Thorberg's daughter, a sister of Harald's wife, Thora. Ulf and Jorun's children were Joan the Strong of Rasvol, and Brigida, mother of Sauda-Ulf, who was

father of Peter Byrdar-Svein, father of Ulf Fly and Sigrid. Joan the Strong's son was Erlend Hímald, father of Archbishop Eysteinn and his brothers. King Harald gave Ulf the marshal the rights of a lenderman and a fief of twelve marks income, besides a half-district in the Thronðhjem land. Of this Stein Herdison speaks in his song about Ulf.

39. OF THE BUILDING OF CHURCHES AND HOUSES.

King Magnus Olafson built Olaf's church in the town (Níðaros), on the spot where Olaf's body was set down for the night, and which, at that time, was above the town. He also had the king's house built there. The church was not quite finished when the king died; but King Harald had what was wanting completed. There, beside the house, he began to construct a stone hall, but it was not finished when he died. King Harald had the church called Mary Church built from the foundations up, at the sandhill close to the spot where the king's holy remains were concealed in the earth the first winter after his fall. It was a large temple, and so strongly built with lime that it was difficult to break it when the Archbishop Eysteinn had it pulled down. Olaf's holy remains were kept in Olaf's church while Mary Church was building. King Harald had the king's house erected below Mary Kirk, at the side of the river, where it now is; and he had the house in which he had made the great hall consecrated and called Gregorius Church.

40. BEGINNING OF HAKON IVARSON'S STORY.

There was a man called Ivar the White, who was a brave lenderman dwelling in the Uplands, and was a daughter's son of Earl Hakon the Great. Ivar was the handsomest man that could be seen. Ivar's son was called Hakon; and of him it was said that he was distinguished above all men then in Norway for beauty, strength and perfection of figure. In his very youth he had been sent out on war expeditions, where he acquired great honour and consideration, and became afterwards one of the most celebrated men.

41. OF EINAR TAMBASKELFER.

Einar Tambaskelfer was the most powerful lenderman in the Thronðhjem land. There was but little friendship between him and King Harald, although Einar retained all the fiefs he had held while Magnus the Good lived. Einar had many large estates, and was married to Bergliot, a daughter of Earl Hakon, as related above. Their son Eindride was grown up, and married to Sigrid, a daughter of Ketil Kalf and Gunhild, King Harald's sister's daughter. Eindride had inherited the beauty of his mother's father, Earl Hakon, and his sons; and in size and strength he took after his father, Einar, and also in all bodily perfections by which Einar had been distinguished above other men. He was, also, as well as his father, the most popular of men, which the sagas, indeed, show sufficiently.

42. OF EARL ORM.

Orm was at that time earl in the Uplands. His mother was Ragnhild, a daughter of Earl Hakon the Great, and Orm was a remarkably clever man. Aslak Erlingsson was then in Jadar at Sole, and was married to Sigrid, a daughter of Earl Svein Hakonson. Gunhild, Earl Svein's other daughter, was married to the Danish king, Svein Ulfson. These were the descendants of Earl Hakon at that time in Norway, besides many other distinguished people; and the whole race was remarkable for their very beautiful appearance, and the most of them were gifted with great bodily perfection, and were all distinguished and important men.

43. HARALD'S PRIDE.

King Harald was very proud, and his pride increased after he was established in the country; and it came so far that at last it was not good to speak against him, or to propose anything different from what he desired. So says Thiodolf, the skald:—

In arms 'tis right the common man
 Should follow orders, one by one,—

Should stoop or rise, or run or stand,
As his war-leader may command;
But now to the king who feeds the ravens
The people bend like heartless cravens—
Nothing is left them, but consent
To what the king calls his intent.

44. OF THE QUARREL OF KING HARALD AND EINAR TAMBASKELFER.

Einar Tambaskelfer was the principal man among the bondes all about Thronthjem, and answered for them at the Things even against the king's men. Einar knew well the law, and did not want boldness to bring forward his opinion at Things, even if the king was present; and all the bondes stood by him. The king was very angry at this, and it came so far that they disputed eagerly against each other. Einar said that the bondes would not put up with any unlawful proceedings from him if he broke through the law of the land; and this occurred several times between them. Einar then began to keep people about him at home, and he had many more when he came into the town if the king was there. It once happened that Einar came to the town with a great many men and ships; he had with him eight or nine great war-ships and nearly 500 men. When he came to the town he went up from the strand with his attendants. King Harald was then in his house, standing out in the gallery of the loft; and when he saw Einar's people going on shore, it is said Harald composed these verses:—

I see great Tambaskelfer go,
With mighty pomp, and pride, and show,
Across the ebb-shore up the land,—
Before, behind, an armed band.
This bonde-leader thinks to rule,
And fill himself the royal stool.
A goodly earl I have known
With fewer followers of his own.
He who strikes fire from the shield,
Einar, may some day make us yield,
Unless our axe-edge quickly ends,
With sudden kiss, what he intends.

Einar remained several days in the town.

45. THE FALL OF EINAR AND EINDRIDE.

One day there was a meeting held in the town, at which the king himself was present. A thief had been taken in the town, and he was brought before the Thing. The man had before been in the service of Einar, who had been very well satisfied with him. This was told to Einar, and he well knew the king would not let the man off, and more because he took an interest in the matter. Einar, therefore, let his men get under arms, went to the Thing, and took the man by force. The friends on both sides then came between and endeavoured to effect a reconciliation; and they succeeded so far that a meeting-place was appointed, to which both should come. There was a Thing-room in the king's house at the river Nid, and the king went into it with a few men, while the most of his people were out in the yard. The king ordered the shutters of the loft-opening to be turned, so that there was but a little space left clear. When Einar came into the yard with his people, he told his son Eindride to remain outside with the men, "for there is no danger here for me." Eindride remained standing outside at the room-door. When Einar came into the Thing-room, he said, "It is dark in the king's Thing-room." At that moment some men ran against him and assaulted him, some with spears, some with swords. When Eindride heard this he drew his sword and rushed into the room; but he was instantly killed along with his father. The king's men then ran up and placed themselves before the door, and the bondes lost courage, having no leader. They urged each other on, indeed, and said it was a shame they should not avenge their chief; but it came to nothing with their attack. The king went out to his men, arrayed them in battle order, and set up his standard: but the bondes did not venture to assault. Then the king went with all his men on board of his ships, rowed down the river, and then took his way out of the fjord. When Einar's wife Bergliot, who was in the house which Einar had possessed in the town, heard of Einar's fall, she went immediately to the king's house where the bondes army was and urged them to the attack; but at the same moment the king was rowing out

of the river. Then said Bergliot, "Now we want here my relation, Hakon Ivarson: Einar's murderer would not be rowing out of the river if Ivar stood here on the riverbank." Then Bergliot adorned Einar's and Eindride's corpses and buried them in Olaf's church, beside King Magnus Olafson's burial-place. After Einar's murder the king was so much disliked for that deed that there was nothing that prevented the lendenmen and bondes from attacking the king, and giving him battle, but the want of some leader to raise the banner in the bonde army.

46. OF KING HARALD AND FIN ARNASON.

Fin Arnason dwelt at Austrat in Yrjar, and was King Harald's lendenman there. Fin was married to Bergliot, a daughter of Halfdan, who was a son of Sigurd Syr, and brother of Olaf the Saint and of King Harald. Thora, King Harald's wife, was Fin Arnason's brother's daughter: and Fin and all his brothers were the king's dearest friends. Fin Arnason had been for some summers on a viking cruise in the West sea; and Fin, Guthorm Gunhildson and Hakon Ivarson had all been together on that cruise. King Harald now proceeded out of Thronthjem fjord to Austrat, where he was well received. Afterwards the king and Fin conversed with each other about this new event of Einar's and his son's death, and of the murmuring and threatening which the bondes made against the king.

Fin took up the conversation briskly, and said, "Thou art managing ill in two ways: first, in doing all manner of mischief; and next, in being so afraid that thou knowest not what to do."

The king replied, laughing, "I will send thee, friend, into the town to bring about a reconciliation with the bondes; and if that will not do, thou must go to the Uplands and bring matters to such an understanding with Hakon Ivarson that he shall not be my opponent."

Fin replies, "And how wilt thou reward me if I undertake this dangerous errand; for both the people of Thronthjem and the people of Upland are so great enemies to thee that it would not be safe for any of thy messengers to come among them, unless he were one who would be spared for his own sake?"

The king replies, "Go thou on this embassy, for I know thou wilt succeed in it if any man can, and bring about a reconciliation; and then choose whatever favour from us thou wilt."

Fin says, "Hold thou thy word, king, and I will choose my petition. I will desire to have peace and safe residence in the country for my brother Kalf, and all his estates restored; and also that he receive all the dignity and power he had when he left the country."

The king assented to all that Fin laid down, and it was confirmed by witnesses and shake of hand.

Then said Fin, "What shall I offer Hakon, who rules most among his relations in the land, to induce him to agree to a treaty and reconciliation with thee?"

The king replies, "Thou shalt first hear what Hakon on his part requires for making an agreement; then promote my interest as thou art best able; and deny him nothing in the end short of the kingdom."

Then King Harald proceeded southwards to More, and drew together men in considerable numbers.

47. OF FIN ARNASON'S JOURNEY.

Fin Arnason proceeded to the town and had with him his house-servants, nearly eighty men. When he came into the town he held a Thing with the town's people. Fin spoke long and ably at the Thing; and told the town's people, and bondes, above all things not to have a hatred against their king, or to drive him away. He reminded them of how much evil they had suffered by acting thus against King Olaf the Saint; and added, that the king was willing to pay penalty for this murder, according to the judgment of understanding and good men. The effect of Fin's speech was that the bondes promised to wait quietly until the messengers came back whom Bergliot had sent to the Uplands to her relative, Hakon Ivarson. Fin then went out to Orkadad with the men who had accompanied him to the town. From thence he went up to Dovrefield, and eastwards over the mountains. He went first to his son-in-law,

Earl Orm, who was married to Sigrid, Fin's daughter, and told him his business.

48. OF FIN AND HAKON IVARSON.

Then Fin and Earl Orm appointed a meeting with Hakon Ivarson; and when they met Fin explained his errand to Hakon, and the offer which King Harald made him. It was soon seen, from Hakon's speech, that he considered it to be his great duty to avenge the death of his relative, Eindride; and added, that word was come to him from Throindhjem, from which he might expect help in making head against the king. Then Fin represented to Hakon how much better it would be for him to accept of as high a dignity from the king as he himself could desire, rather than to attempt raising a strife against the king to whom he was owing service and duty. He said if he came out of the conflict without victory, he forfeited life and property: "And even if thou hast the victory, thou wilt still be called a traitor to thy sovereign." Earl Orm also supported Fin's speech. After Hakon had reflected upon this he disclosed what lay on his mind, and said, "I will be reconciled with King Harald if he will give me in marriage his relation Ragnhild, King Magnus Olafson's daughter, with such dower as is suitable to her and she will be content with." Fin said he would agree to this on the king's part; and thus it was settled among them. Fin then returned to Throindhjem, and the disturbance and enmity was quashed, so that the king could retain his kingdom in peace at home; and the league was broken which Eindride's relations had made among themselves for opposing King Harald.

49. OF THE COURTSHIP OF HAKON IVARSON.

When the day arrived for the meeting at which this agreement with Harald should be finally concluded, Hakon went to King Harald; and in their conference the king said that he, for his part, would adhere to all that was settled in their agreement. "Thou Hakon," says he, "must thyself settle that which concerns Ragnhild, as to her accepting thee in marriage; for it would not be advisable for thee, or for any one, to marry Ragnhild without her consent." Then Hakon went to Ragnhild, and paid his addresses to her. She answered him thus: "I have often to feel that my father, King Magnus, is dead and gone from me, since I must marry a bonde; although I acknowledge thou art a handsome man, expert in all exercises. But if King Magnus had lived he would not have married me to any man less than a king; so it is not to be expected that I will take a man who has no dignity or title." Then Hakon went to King Harald and told him his conversation with Ragnhild, and also repeated the agreement which was made between him and Fin, who was with him, together with many others of the persons who had been present at the conversation between him and Fin. Hakon takes them all to witness that such was the agreement that the king should give Ragnhild the dower she might desire. "And now since she will have no man who has not a high dignity, thou must give me such a title of honour; and, according to the opinion of the people, I am of birth, family and other qualifications to be called earl."

The king replies, "When my brother, King Olaf, and his son, King Magnus, ruled the kingdom, they allowed only one earl at a time to be in the country, and I have done the same since I came to the kingly title; and I will not take away from Orm the title of honour I had before given him."

Hakon saw now that his business had not advanced, and was very ill pleased; and Fin was outrageously angry. They said the king had broken his word; and thus they all separated.

50. HAKON'S JOURNEY TO DENMARK.

Hakon then went out of the country with a well-manned ship. When he came to Denmark he went immediately to his relative, King Svein, who received him honourably and gave him great fiefs. Hakon became King Svein's commander of the coast defence against the vikings,—the Vindland people, Kurland people, and others from the East countries,—who infested the Danish dominions; and he lay out with his ships of war both winter and summer.

51. MURDER OF ASMUND.

There was a man called Asmund, who is said to have been King Svein's sister's son, and his foster-son. This Asmund was distinguished among all by his boldness and was much disliked by the king. When Asmund came to years, and to age of discretion, he became an ungovernable person given to murder and manslaughter. The king was ill pleased at this, and sent him away, giving him a good fief, which might keep him and his followers well. As soon as Asmund had got this property from the king he drew together a large troop of people; and as the estate he had got from the king was not sufficient for his expenses he took as his own much more which belonged to the king. When the king heard this he summoned Asmund to him, and when they met the king said that Asmund should remain with the court without keeping any retinue of his own; and this took place as the king desired. But when Asmund had been a little time in the king's court he grew weary of being there, and escaped in the night, returned to his former companions and did more mischief than ever. Now when the king was riding through the country he came to the neighbourhood where Asmund was, and he sent out men-at-arms to seize him. The king then had him laid in irons, and kept him so for some time in hope he would reform; but no sooner did Asmund get rid of his chains than he absconded again, gathered together people and men-at-arms and betook himself to plunder, both abroad and at home. Thus he made great forays, killing and plundering all around. When the people who suffered under these disturbances came to the king and complained to him of their losses, he replied, "Why do ye tell me of this? Why don't you go to Hakon Ivarson, who is my officer for the land-defence, placed on purpose to keep the peace for you peasants, and to hold the vikings in check? I was told that Hakon was a gallant and brave man, but I think he is rather shy when any danger of life is in the way." These words of the king were brought to Hakon, with many additions. Then Hakon went with his men in search of Asmund, and when their ships met Hakon gave battle immediately—and the conflict was sharp, and many men were killed. Hakon boarded Asmund's ship and cut down the men before his feet. At last he and Asmund met and exchanged blows until Asmund fell. Hakon cut off his head, went in all haste to King Svein and found him just sitting down to the dinner-table. Hakon presented himself before the table, laid Asmund's head upon the table before the king, and asked if he knew it. The king made no reply, but became as red as blood in the face. Soon after the king sent him a message, ordering him to leave his service immediately. "Tell him I will do him no harm; but I cannot keep watch over all our relations."

52. HAKON IVARSON'S MARRIAGE.

Hakon then left Denmark, and came north to his estates in Norway. His relation Earl Orm was dead. Hakon's relations and friends were glad to see Hakon, and many gallant men gave themselves much trouble to bring about a reconciliation between King Harald and Hakon. It was at last settled in this way, that Hakon got Ragnhild, the king's daughter, and that King Harald gave Hakon the earldom, with the same power Earl Orm had possessed. Hakon swore to King Harald an oath of fidelity to all the services he was liable to fulfill.

53. RECONCILIATION OF KING HARALD AND KALF.

Kalf Arnason had been on a viking cruise to the Western countries ever since he had left Norway; but in winter he was often in the Orkney Islands with his relative, Earl Thorfin. Fin Arnason sent a message to his brother Kalf, and told him the agreement which he had made with King Harald, that Kalf should enjoy safety in Norway, and his estates, and all the fiefs he had held from King Magnus. When this message came to Kalf he immediately got ready for his voyage, and went east to Norway to his brother Fin. Then Fin obtained the king's peace for Kalf, and when Kalf and the king met they went into the agreement which Fin and the king had settled upon before. Kalf bound himself to the king in the same way as he had bound himself to serve King Magnus, according to which Kalf should do all that the king desired and considered of advantage to

his realm. Thereupon Kalf received all the estates and fiefs he had before.

54. FALL OF KALF ARNASON.

The summer following (A.D. 1050) King Harald ordered out a levy, and went to Denmark, where he plundered during the summer; but when he came south to Fyen he found a great force assembled against him. Then the king prepared to land his men from the ships and to engage in a land-fight. He drew up his men on board in order of battle; set Kalf Arnason at the head of one division; ordered him to make the first attack, and told him where they should direct their assault, promising that he would soon make a landing with the others, and come to their assistance. When Kalf came to the land with his men a force came down immediately to oppose them, and Kalf without delay engaged in battle, which, however, did not last long; for Kalf was immediately overpowered by numbers, and betook himself to flight with his men. The Danes pursued them vigorously, and many of the Northmen fell, and among them Kalf Arnason. Now King Harald landed with his array; and they soon came on their way to the field of battle, where they found Kalf's body, and bore it down to the ships. But the king penetrated into the country, killing many people and destroying much. So says Arnor:—

His shining sword with blood he stains,
Upon Fyona's grassy plains;
And in the midst of fire and smoke,
The king Fyona's forces broke.

55. FIN ARNASON'S EXPEDITION OUT OF THE COUNTRY.

After this Fin Arnason thought he had cause to be an enemy of the king upon account of his brother Kalf's death; and said the king had betrayed Kalf to his fall, and had also deceived him by making him entice his brother Kalf to come over from the West and trust to King Harald's faith. When these speeches came out among people, many said that it was very foolish in Fin to have ever supposed that Kalf could obtain the king's sincere friendship and favour; for they thought the king was the man to seek revenge for smaller offences than Kalf had committed against the king. The king let every one say what he chose, and he himself neither said yes or no about the affair; but people perceived that the king was very well pleased with what had happened. King Harald once made these verses:—

I have, in all, the death-stroke given
To foes of mine at least eleven;
Two more, perhaps, if I remember,
May yet be added to this number,
I prize myself upon these deeds,
My people such examples needs.
Bright gold itself they would despise,
Or healing leek-herb underprize,
If not still brought before their eyes.

Fin Arnason took the business so much to heart that he left the country and went to Denmark to King Svein, where he met a friendly reception. They spoke together in private for a long time; and the end of the business was that Fin went into King Svein's service, and became his man. King Svein then gave Fin an earldom, and placed him in Halland, where he was long earl and defended the country against the Northmen.

56. OF GUTHORM GUNHILDSON.

Ketil Kalf and Gunhild of Ringanes had a son called Guthorm, and he was a sister's son to King Olaf and Harald Sigurdson. Guthorm was a gallant man, early advanced to manhood. He was often with King Harald, who loved him much, and asked his advice; for he was of good understanding, and very popular. Guthorm had also been engaged early in forays, and had marauded much in the Western countries with a large force. Ireland was for him a land of peace; and he had his winter quarters often in Dublin, and was in great friendship with King Margad.

57. GUTHORM'S JUNCTION WITH THE IRISH KING MARGAD.

The summer after King Margad, and Guthorm with him, went out on an expedition against Bretland, where they made immense booty. But when the king saw the quantity of silver which was gathered he wanted to have the whole booty, and regarded little his friendship for Guthorm. Guthorm was ill pleased that he and his men should be robbed of their share; but the king said, "Thou must choose one of two things,—either to be content with what we determine, or to fight; and they shall have the booty who gain the victory; and likewise thou must give up thy ships, for them I will have." Guthorm thought there were great difficulties on both sides; for it was disgraceful to give up ships and goods without a stroke, and yet it was highly dangerous to fight the king and his force, the king having sixteen ships and Guthorm only five. Then Guthorm desired three days' time to consider the matter with his people, thinking in that time to pacify the king, and come to a better understanding with him through the mediation of others; but he could not obtain from the king what he desired. This was the day before St. Olaf's day. Guthorm chose the condition that they would rather die or conquer like men, than suffer disgrace, contempt and scorn, by submitting to so great a loss. He called upon God, and his uncle Saint Olaf, and entreated their help and aid; promising to give to the holy man's house the tenth of all the booty that fell to their share, if they gained the victory. Then he arranged his men, placed them in battle order against the great force, prepared for battle, and gave the assault. By the help of God, and the holy Saint Olaf, Guthorm won the battle. King Margad fell, and every man, old and young, who followed him; and after that great victor, Guthorm and all his people returned home joyfully with all the booty they had gained by the battle. Every tenth penny of the booty they had made was taken, according to the vow, to King Olaf the Saint's shrine; and there was so much silver that Guthorm had an image made of it, with rays round the head, which was the size of his own, or of his fore-castle-man's head; and the image was seven feet high. The image thus produced was given by Guthorm to King Olaf of the Saint's temple, where it has since remained as a memorial of Guthorm's victory and King Olaf the Saint's miracle.

58. MIRACLE OF KING OLAF IN DENMARK.

There was a wicked, evil-minded count in Denmark who had a Norwegian servant-girl whose family belonged to Throndhjem district. She worshipped King Olaf the Saint, and believed firmly in his sanctity. But the above mentioned count doubted all that was told of the holy man's miracles, insisted that it was nothing but nonsense and idle talk, and made a joke and scorn of the esteem and honour which all the country people showed the good king. Now when his holyday came, on which the mild monarch ended his life, and which all Northmen kept sacred, this unreasonable count would not observe it, but ordered his servant-girl to bake and put fire in the oven that day. She knew well the count's mad passion, and that he would revenge himself severely on her if she refused doing as he ordered. She went, therefore, of necessity, and baked in the oven, but wept much at her work; and she threatened King Olaf that she never would believe in him, if he did not avenge this misdeed by some mischance or other. And now shall ye come to hear a well-deserved vengeance, and a true miracle. It happened, namely, in the same hour that the count became blind of both eyes, and the bread which she had shoved into the oven was turned into stone! Of these stones some are now in St. Olaf's temple, and in other places; and since that time Olafsmas has been always held holy in Denmark.

59. KING OLAF'S MIRACLE ON A CRIPPLE.

West in Valland, a man had such bad health that he became a cripple, and went on his knees and elbows. One day he was upon the road, and had fallen asleep. He dreamt that a gallant man came up to him and asked him where he was going. When he named the neighbouring town, the man said to him, "Go to Saint Olaf's church that stands in London, and there thou shalt be cured."

There-upon he awoke, and went straightway to inquire the road to Olaf's church in London. At last he came to London Bridge, and asked the men of the castle if they could tell him where Olaf's church was; but they replied, there were so many churches that they could not tell to whom each of them was consecrated. Soon after a man came up and asked him where he wanted to go, and he answered to Olaf's church. Then said the man, "We shall both go together to Olaf's church, for I know the way to it." There-upon they went over the bridge to the shrine where Olaf's church was; and when they came to the gates of the churchyard the man mounted over the half-door that was in the gate, but the cripple rolled himself in, and rose up immediately sound and strong; when he looked about him his conductor had vanished.

60. KING HARALD'S FORAY IN DENMARK.

King Harald had built a merchant town in the East at Oslo, where he often resided; for there was good supply from the extensive cultivated district wide around. There also he had a convenient station to defend the country against the Danes, or to make an attack upon Denmark, which he was in the custom of doing often, although he kept no great force on foot. One summer King Harald went from thence with a few light ships and a few men. He steered southwards out from Viken, and, when the wind served, stood over to Jutland, and marauded; but the country people collected and defended the country. Then King Harald steered to Limfjord, and went into the fjord. Limfjord is so formed that its entrance is like a narrow river; but when one gets farther into the fjord it spreads out into a wide sea. King Harald marauded on both sides of the land; and when the Danes gathered together on every side to oppose him, he lay at a small island which was uncultivated. They wanted drink on board his ships, and went up into the island to seek water; but finding none, they reported it to the king. He ordered them to look for some long earthworms on the island, and when they found one they brought it to the king. He ordered the people to bring the worm to a fire, and bake it before it, so that it should be thirsty. Then he ordered a thread to be tied round the tail of the worm, and to let it loose. The worm crept away immediately, while thread wound off from the clew as the worm took it away; and the people followed the worm until it sought downwards in the earth. There the king ordered them to dig for water, which they did, and found so much water that they had no want of it. King Harald now heard from his spies that King Svein was come with a large armament to the mouth of the fjord; but that it was too late for him to come into it, as only one ship at a time can come in. King Harald then steered with his fleet in through the fjord to where it was broadest to a place called Lusbreid. In the inmost bight, there is but a narrow neck of land dividing the fjord from the West sea. Thither King Harald rowed with his men towards evening; and at night when it was dark he unloaded his ships, drew them over the neck of land into the West sea, loaded them again, and was ready with all this before day. He then steered northwards along the Jutland coast. People then said that Harald had escaped from the hands of the Danes. Harald said that he would come to Denmark next time with more people and larger vessels. King Harald then proceeded north to Throndhjem.

61. KING HARALD HAD A SHIP BUILT.

King Harald remained all winter at Nidaros (A.D. 1062) and had a vessel built out upon the strand, and it was a buss. The ship was built of the same size as the Long Serpent, and every part of her was finished with the greatest care. On the stem was a dragon-head, and on the stern a dragon-tail, and the sides of the bows of the ship were gilt. The vessel was of thirty-five rowers benches, and was large for that size, and was remarkably handsome; for the king had everything belonging to the ship's equipment of the best, both sails and rigging, anchors and cables. King Harald sent a message in winter south to Denmark to King Svein, that he should come northwards in spring; that they should meet at the Gaut river and fight, and so settle the division of the countries that the one who gained the victory should have both kingdoms.

62. KING HARALD'S CHALLENGE.

King Harald during this winter called out a general levy of all the people of Norway, and assembled a great force towards spring. Then Harald had his great ship drawn down and put into the river Nid, and set up the dragon's head on her. Thiodolf, the skald, sang about it thus:—

My lovely girl! the sight was grand
When the great war-ships down the strand
Into the river gently slid,
And all below her sides was hid.
Come, lovely girl, and see the show!—
Her sides that on the water glow,
Her serpent-head with golden mane,
All shining back from the Nid again.

Then King Harald rigged out his ship, got ready for sea, and when he had all in order went out of the river. His men rowed very skilfully and beautifully. So says Thiodolf:—

It was upon a Saturday,
Ship-tilts were struck and stowed away,
And past the town our dragon glides,
That girls might see our glancing sides.
Out from the Nid brave Harald steers;
Westward at first the dragon veers;
Our lads together down with oars,
The splash is echoed round the shores.
"Their oars our king's men handle well,
One stroke is all the eye can tell:
All level o'er the water rise;
The girls look on in sweet surprise.
Such things, they think, can ne'er give way;
The little know the battle day.
The Danish girls, who dread our shout,
Might wish our ship-gear not so stout.
"Tis in the fight, not on the wave,
That oars may break and fail the brave.
At sea, beneath the ice-cold sky,
Safely our oars o'er ocean ply;
And when at Throndhjem's holy stream
Our seventy cars in distance gleam,
We seem, while rowing from the sea,
An erne with iron wings to be.

King Harald sailed south along the land, and called out the levy everywhere of men and ships. When they came east to Viken they got a strong wind against them and the forces lay dispersed about in the harbour; some in the isles outside, and some in the fjords. So says Thiodolf:—

The cutters' sea-bleached bows scarce find
A shelter from the furious wind
Under the inland forests' side,
Where the fjord runs its farthest tide.
In all the isles and creeks around
The bondes' ships lie on the ground,
And ships with gunwales hung with shields
Seek the lee-side of the green fields.

In the heavy storm that raged for some time the great ship had need of good ground tackle. So says Thiodolf:—

With lofty bow above the seas,
Which curl and fly before the breeze,
The gallant vessel rides and reels,
And every plunge her cable feels.
The storm that tries the spar and mast
Tries the main-anchor at the last:
The storm above, below the rock,
Chafe the thick cable with each shock.

When the weather became favourable King Harald sailed eastwards to the Gaut river with his fleet and arrived there in the evening. So says Thiodolf:—

The gallant Harald now has come
To Gaut, full half way from his home,
And on the river frontier stands,
To fight with Svein for life and lands.
The night passed o'er, the gallant king
Next day at Thumia calls a Thing,
Where Svein is challenged to appear—
A day which ravens wish were near.

63. OF KING HARALD'S FLEET.

When the Danes heard that the Northmen's army was come to the Gaut river they all fled who had opportunity to get away. The Northmen heard that the Danish king had also called out his

forces and lay in the south, partly at Fyen and partly about Seeland. When King Harald found that King Svein would not hold a meeting with him, or a fight, according to what had been agreed upon between them, he took the same course as before—letting the bonde troops return home, but manning 150 ships, with which he sailed southwards along Halland, where he herried all round, and then brought up with his fleet in Lofufjord, and laid waste the country. A little afterwards King Svein came upon them with all the Danish fleet, consisting of 300 ships. When the Northmen saw them King Harald ordered a general meeting of the fleet to be called by sound of trumpet; and many there said it was better to fly, as it was not now advisable to fight. The king replied, "Sooner shall all lie dead one upon another than fly." So says Stein Herdison:—

With falcon eye, and courage bright,
Our king saw glory in the fight;
To fly, he saw, would ruin bring
On them and him—the folk and king.
'Hands up the arms to one and all!'
Cries out the king; 'we'll win or fall!
Sooner than fly, heaped on each other
Each man shall fall across his brother!'

Then King Harald drew up his ships to attack, and brought forward his great dragon in the middle of his fleet. So says Thiodolf:—

The brave king through his vessels' throng
His dragon war-ship moves along;
He runs her gaily to the front,
To meet the coming battle's brunt.

The ship was remarkably well equipt, and fully manned. So says Thiodolf:—

The king had got a chosen crew—
He told his brave lads to stand true.
The ring of shields seemed to enclose
The ship's deck from the boarding foes.
The dragon, on the Nis-river flood,
Beset with men, who thickly stood,
Shield touching shield, was something rare,
That seemed all force of man to dare.

Ulf, the marshal, laid his ship by the side of the king's and ordered his men to bring her well forward. Stein Herdison, who was himself in Ulf's ship, sings of it thus:—

Our oars were stowed, our lances high,
As the ship moved swung in the sky.
The marshal Ulf went through our ranks,
Drawn up beside the rowers' banks:
The brave friend of our gallant king
Told us our ship well on to bring,
And fight like Norsemen in the cause—
Our Norsemen answered with huzzas.

Hakon Ivarson lay outside on the other wing, and had many ships with him, all well equipt. At the extremity of the other side lay the Throndhjem chiefs, who had also a great and strong force.

64. OF KING SVEIN'S ARMAMENT.

Svein, the Danish king, also drew up his fleet, and laid his ship forward in the center against King Harald's ship, and Fin Arnason laid his ship next; and then the Danes laid their ships, according as they were bold or well-equipt. Then, on both sides, they bound the ships together all through the middle of the fleets; but as the fleets were so large, very many ships remained loose, and each laid his ship forward according to his courage, and that was very unequal. Although the difference among the men was great, altogether there was a very great force on both sides. King Svein had six earls among the people following him. So says Stein Herdison:—

Danger our chief would never shun,
With eight score ships he would not run:
The Danish fleet he would abide,
And give close battle side by side.
From Leire's coast the Danish king
Three hundred ocean steeds could bring,
And o'er the sea-weed plain in haste
Thought Harald's vessels would be chased.

65. BEGINNING OF THE BATTLE OF NIS-RIVER.

As soon as King Harald was ready with his fleet, he orders the war-blast to sound, and the men to row forward to the attack. So says Stein Herdison:—

Harald and Svein first met as foes,
Where the Nis in the ocean flows;
For Svein would not for peace entreat,
But, strong in ships, would Harald meet.
The Norsemen prove, with sword in hand,
That numbers cannot skill withstand.
Off Halland's coast the blood of Danes
The blue sea's calm smooth surface stains.

Soon the battle began, and became very sharp; both kings urging on their men. So says Stein Herdison:—

Our king, his broad shield disregarding,
More keen for striking than for warding,
Now tells his lads their spears to throw,—
Now shows them where to strike a blow.
From fleet to fleet so short the way,
That stones and arrows have full play;
And from the keen sword dropped the blood
Of short-lived seamen in the flood.

It was late in the day when the battle began, and it continued the whole night. King Harald shot for a long time with his bow. So says Thiodolf:—

The Upland king was all the night
Speeding the arrows' deadly flight.
All in the dark his bow-string's twang
Was answered; for some white shield rang.
Or yelling shriek gave certain note
The shaft had pierced some ring-mail coat,
The foemen's shields and bulwarks bore
A Lapland arrow-scat or more.

Earl Hakon, and the people who followed him, did not make fast their ships in the fleet, but rowed against the Danish ships that were loose, and slew the men of all the ships they came up with. When the Danes observed this each drew his ship out of the way of the earl; but he set upon those who were trying to escape, and they were nearly driven to flight. Then a boat came rowing to the earl's ship and hailed him and said that the other wing of King Harald's fleet was giving way and many of their people had fallen. Then the earl rowed thither and gave so severe an assault that the Danes had to retreat before him. The earl went on in this way all the night, coming forward where he was most wanted, and wheresoever he came none could stand against him. Hakon rowed outside around the battle. Towards the end of the night the greatest part of the Danish fleet broke into flight, for then King Harald with his men boarded the vessel of King Svein; and it was so completely cleared that all the crew fell in the ship, except those who sprang overboard. So says Arnor, the earls' skald:—

Brave Svein did not his vessel leave
Without good cause, as I believe:
Oft on his casque the sword-blade rang,
Before into the sea he sprang.
Upon the wave his vessel drives;
All his brave crew had lost their lives.
O'er dead courtmen into the sea
The Jutland king had now to flee.

And when King Svein's banner was cut down, and his ship cleared of its crew, all his forces took to flight, and some were killed. The ships which were bound together could not be cast loose, so the people who were in them sprang overboard, and some got to the other ships that were loose; and all King Svein's men who could get off rowed away, but a great many of them were slain. Where the king himself fought the ships were mostly bound together, and there were more than seventy left behind of King Svein's vessels. So says Thiodolf:—

Svein's ships rode proudly o'er the deep,
When, by a single sudden sweep,
Full seventy sail, as we are told,
Were seized by Norway's monarch bold.

King Harald rowed after the Danes and pursued them; but that was not easy, for the ships lay so thick together that they scarcely could move. Earl Fin Arnason would not flee; and being also short-sighted, was taken prisoner. So says Thiodolf:—

To the six Danish earls who came
To aid his force, and raise his name,
No mighty thanks King Svein is owing
For mighty actions of their doing.
Fin Arnason, in battle known,
With a stout Norse heart of his own,
Would not take flight his life to gain,
And in the foremost ranks was ta'en.

66. KING SVEIN'S FLIGHT.

Earl Hakon lay behind with his ships, while the king and the rest of the forces were pursuing the fugitives; for the earls' ships could not get forward on account of the ships which lay in the way before him. Then a man came rowing in a boat to the earl's ship and lay at the bulwarks. The man was stout and had on a white hat. He hailed the ship, "Where is the earl?" said he.

The earl was in the fore-hold, stopping a man's blood. The earl cast a look at the man in the hat and asked what his name was. He answered, "Here is Vandrad: speak to me, earl."

The earl leant over the ship's side to him. Then the man in the boat said, "Earl, I will accept of my life from thee, if thou wilt give it."

Then the earl raised himself up, called two men who were friends dear to him, and said to them, "Go into the boat; bring Vandrad to the land; attend him to my friend's Karl the bonde; and tell Karl, as a token that these words come from me, that he let Vandrad have the horse which I gave to him yesterday, and also his saddle, and his son to attend him."

Thereupon they went into the boat and took the oars in hand, while Vandrad steered. This took place just about daybreak, while the vessels were in movement, some rowing towards the land, some towards the sea, both small and great. Vandrad steered where he thought there was most room between the vessels; and when they came near to Norway's ships the earl's men gave their names and then they all allowed them to go where they pleased. Vandrad steered along the shore, and only set in towards the land when they had come past the crowd of ships. They then went up to Karl the bonde's farm, and it was then beginning to be light. They went into the room where Karl had just put on his clothes. The earl's men told him their message and Karl said they must first take some food; and he set a table before them and gave them water to wash with.

Then came the housewife into the room and said, "I wonder why we could get no peace or rest all night with the shouting and screaming."

Karl replies, "Dost thou not know that the kings were fighting all night?"

She asked which had the better of it.

Karl answered, "The Northmen gained."

"Then," said she, "our king will have taken flight."

"Nobody knows," says Karl, "whether he has fled or is fallen."

She says, "What a useless sort of king we have! He is both slow and frightened."

Then said Vandrad, "Frightened he is not; but he is not lucky."

Then Vandrad washed his hands; but he took the towel and dried them right in the middle of the cloth. The housewife snatched the towel from him, and said, "Thou hast been taught little good; it is wasteful to wet the whole cloth at one time."

Vandrad replies, "I may yet come so far forward in the world as to be able to dry myself with the middle of the towel."

Thereupon Karl set a table before them and Vandrad sat down between them. They ate for a while and then went out. The horse was saddled and Karl's son ready to follow him with another horse. They rode away to the forest; and the earl's men returned to the boat, rowed to the earl's ship and told the success of their expedition.

67. OF KING HARALD.

King Harald and his men followed the fugitives only a short way, and rowed back to the place where the deserted ships lay. Then the battle-place was ransacked, and in King Svein's ship was found a heap of dead men; but the king's body was not found, although people believed for certain that he had fallen. Then King Harald had the greatest attention paid to the dead of his men, and had the

wounds of the living bound up. The dead bodies of Svein's men were brought to the land, and he sent a message to the peasants to come and bury them. Then he let the booty be divided, and this took up some time. The news came now that King Svein had come to Seeland, and that all who had escaped from the battle had joined him, along with many more, and that he had a great force.

68. FIN ARNASON GETS QUARTER.

Earl Fin Arnason was taken prisoner in the battle, as before related; and when he was led before King Harald the king was very merry, and said, "Fin, we meet here now, and we met last in Norway. The Danish court has not stood very firmly by thee; and it will be a troublesome business for Northmen to drag thee, a blind old man, with them, and preserve thy life."

The earl replies, "The Northmen find it very difficult now to conquer, and it is all the worse that thou hast the command of them."

Then said King Harald, "Wilt thou accept of life and safety, although thou hast not deserved it?"

The earl replies, "Not from thee, thou dog."

The king: "Wilt thou, then, if thy relation Magnus gives thee quarter?"

Magnus, King Harald's son, was then steering the ship.

The earl replies, "Can the whelp rule over life and quarter?"

The king laughed, as if he found amusement in vexing him.—

"Wilt thou accept thy life, then, from thy she-relation Thoror?"

The earl: "Is she here?"

"She is here," said the king.

Then Earl Fin broke out with the ugly expressions which since have been preserved, as a proof that he was so mad with rage that he could not govern his tongue:—

"No wonder thou hast bit so strongly, if the mare was with thee."

Earl Fin got life and quarter and the king kept him a while about him. But Fin was rather melancholy and obstinate in conversation; and King Harald said, "I see, Fin, that thou dost not live willingly in company with me and thy relations; now I will give thee leave to go to thy friend King Svein."

The earl said, "I accept of the offer willingly, and the more gratefully the sooner I get away from hence."

The king afterwards let Earl Fin be landed and the traders going to Halland received him well. King Harald sailed from thence to Norway with his fleet; and went first to Oslo, where he gave all his people leave to go home who wished to do so.

69. OF KING SVEIN.

King Svein, it is told, sat in Denmark all that winter, and had his kingdom as formerly. In winter he sent men north to Halland for Karl the bonde and his wife. When Karl came the king called him to him and asked him if he knew him, or thought he had ever seen him before.

Karl replies, "I know thee, sire, and knew thee before, the moment I saw thee; and God be praised if the small help I could give was of any use to thee."

The king replies, "I have to reward thee for all the days I have to live. And now, in the first place, I will give thee any farm in Seeland thou wouldst desire to have; and, in the next place, will make thee a great man, if thou knowest how to conduct thyself."

Karl thanked the king for his promise, and said he had now but one thing to ask.

The king asked what that was.

Karl said that he would ask to take his wife with him.

The king said, "I will not let thee do that; but I will provide thee a far better and more sensible wife. But thy wife can keep the bonde-farm ye had before and she will have her living from it."

The king gave Karl a great and valuable farm, and provided him a good marriage; and he became a considerable man. This was reported far and wide and much praised; and thus it came to be told in Norway.

70. OF THE TALK OF THE COURT-MEN.

King Harald stayed in Oslo the winter after the battle at Nis-river (A.D. 1063). In autumn, when the men came from the south, there was much talk and many stories about the battle which they had fought at Nis-river, and every one who had been there thought he could tell something about it. Once some of them sat in a cellar and drank, and were very merry and talkative. They talked about the Nis-river battle, and who had earned the greatest praise and renown. They all agreed that no man there had been at all equal to Earl Hakon. He was the boldest in arms, the quickest, and the most lucky; what he did was of the greatest help, and he won the battle. King Harald, in the meantime, was out in the yard, and spoke with some people. He went then to the room-door, and said, "Every one here would willingly be called Hakon;" and then went his way.

71. OF THE ATTEMPT TO TAKE EARL HAKON.

Earl Hakon went in winter to the Uplands, and was all winter in his domains. He was much beloved by all the Uplanders. It happened, towards spring, that some men were sitting drinking in the town, and the conversation turned, as usual, on the Nis-river battle; and some praised Earl Hakon, and some thought others as deserving of praise as he. When they had thus disputed a while, one of them said, "It is possible that others fought as bravely as the earl at Nis-river; but none, I think, has had such luck with him as he."

The others replied, that his best luck was his driving so many Danes to flight along with other men.

The same man replied, "It was greater luck that he gave King Svein quarter."

One of the company said to him, "Thou dost not know what thou art saying."

He replied, "I know it for certain, for the man told me himself who brought the king to the land."

It went, according to the old proverb, that the king has many ears. This was told the king, and he immediately ordered horses to be gathered, and rode away directly with 900 men. He rode all that night and the following day. Then some men met them who were riding to the town with mead and malt. In the king's retinue was a man called Gamal, who rode to one of these bondes who was an acquaintance of his, and spoke to him privately. "I will pay thee," said he, "to ride with the greatest speed, by the shortest private paths that thou knowest, to Earl Hakon, and tell him the king will kill him; for the king has got to the knowledge that Earl Hakon set King Svein on shore at Nis-river." They agreed on the payment. The bonde rode, and came to the earl just as he was sitting drinking, and had not yet gone to bed. When the bonde told his errand, the earl immediately stood up with all his men, had all his loose property removed from the farm to the forest, and all the people left the house in the night. When the king came he halted there all night; but Hakon rode away, and came east to Svithjod to King Steinkel and stayed with him all summer. King Harald returned to the town, travelled northwards to Thronthjem district, and remained there all summer; but in autumn he returned eastwards to Viken.

72. OF EARL HAKON.

As soon as Earl Hakon heard the king had gone north he returned immediately in summer to the Uplands (A.D. 1063), and remained there until the king had returned from the north. Then the earl went east into Vermaland, where he remained during the winter, and where the king, Steinkel, gave him fiefs. For a short time in winter he went west to Raumarike with a great troop of men from Gautland and Vermaland, and received the scat and duties from the Upland people which belonged to him, and then returned to Glutland, and remained there till spring. King Harald had his seat in Oslo all winter (A.D. 1064), and sent his men to the Uplands to demand the scat, together with the king's land dues, and the mulcts of court; but the Uplanders said they would pay all the scat and dues which they had to pay, to Earl Hakon as long as he

was in life, and had forfeited his life or his fief; and the king got no dues that winter.

73. AGREEMENT BETWEEN KING HARALD AND KING SVEIN.

This winter messengers and ambassadors went between Norway and Denmark, whose errand was that both Northmen and Danes should make peace, and a league with each other, and to ask the kings to agree to it. These messages gave favourable hopes of a peace; and the matter proceeded so far that a meeting for peace was appointed at the Gaut river between King Harald and King Svein. When spring approached, both kings assembled many ships and people for this meeting. So says a skald in a poem on this expedition of the kings, which begins thus:—

The king, who from the northern sound
His land with war-ships girds around,
The raven-feeder, filled the coast
With his proud ships, a gallant host!
The gold-tipped stems dash through the foam
That shakes the seamen's planked home;
The high wave breaks up to the mast,
As west of Halland on they passed,
"Harald whose word is fixed and sure,
Whose ships his land from foes secure,
And Svein, whose isles maintain is fleet,
Hasten as friends again to meet;
And every creek with vessels teems,—
All Denmark men and shipping seems;
And all rejoice that strife will cease,
And men meet now but to make peace.

Here it is told that the two kings held the meeting that was agreed upon between them, and both came to the frontiers of their kingdoms. So says the skald:—

To meet (since peace the Dane now craves)
On to the south upon the waves
Sailed forth our gallant northern king,
Peace to the Danes with him to bring,
Svein northward to his frontier hies
To get the peace his people prize,
And meet King Harald, whom he finds
On land hard used by stormy winds.

When the kings found each other, people began at once to talk of their being reconciled. But as soon as peace was proposed, many began to complain of the damage they had sustained by harrying, robbing and killing men; and for a long time it did not look very like peace. It is here related:—

Before this meeting of the kings
Each bende his own losses brings,
And loudly claims some recompense
From his king's foes, at their expense.
It is not easy to make peace,
Where noise and talking never cease:
The bondes' warmth may quickly spread,
And kings be by the people led.
"When kings are moved, no peace is sure;
For that peace only is secure
Which they who make it fairly make,—
To each side give, from each side take.
The kings will often rule but ill
Who listen to the people's will:
The people often have no view
But their own interests to pursue.

At last the best men, and those who were the wisest, came between the kings, and settled the peace thus:—that Harald should have Norway, and Svein Denmark, according to the boundaries of old established between Denmark and Norway; neither of them should pay to the other for any damage sustained; the war should cease as it now stood, each retaining what he had got; and this peace should endure as long as they were kings. This peace was confirmed by oath. Then the kings parted, having given each other hostages, as is here related:—

And I have heard that to set fast
The peace God brought about at last,
Svein and stern Harald pledges sent,
Who witnessed to their sworn intent;
And much I wish that they and all
In no such perjury may fall
That this peace ever should be broken,
And oaths should fail before God spoken.

King Harald with his people sailed northwards to Norway, and King Svein southwards to Denmark.

74. KING HARALD'S BATTLE WITH EARL HAKON.

King Harald was in Viken in the summer (A.D. 1064), and he sent his men to the Uplands after the scat and duty which belonged to him; but the bondes paid no attention to the demand, but said they would hold all for Earl Hakon until he came for it. Earl Hakon was then up in Gautland with a large armed force. When summer was past King Harald went south to Konungahella. Then he took all the light-sailing vessels he could get hold of and steered up the river. He had the vessels drawn past all the waterfalls and brought them thus into the Wener lake. Then he rowed eastward across the lake to where he heard Earl Hakon was; but when the earl got news of the king's expedition he retreated down the country, and would not let the king plunder the land. Earl Hakon had a large armed force which the Gautland people had raised for him. King Harald lay with his ships up in a river, and made a foray on land, but left some of his men behind to protect the ships. The king himself rode up with a part of the men, but the greater part were on foot. They had to cross a forest, where they found a mire or lake, and close to it a wood; and when they reached the wood they saw the earl's men, but the mire was between them. They drew up their people now on both sides. Then King Harald ordered his men to sit down on the hillside. "We will first see if they will attack us. Earl Hakon does not usually wait to talk." It was frosty weather, with some snow-drift, and Harald's men sat down under their shields; but it was cold for the Gautlanders, who had but little clothing with them. The earl told them to wait until King Harald came nearer, so that all would stand equally high on the ground. Earl Hakon had the same banner which had belonged to King Magnus Olafson.

The lagman of the Gautland people, Thorvid, sat upon a horse, and the bridle was fastened to a stake that stood in the mire. He broke out with these words: "God knows we have many brave and handsome fellows here, and we shall let King Steinkel hear that we stood by the good earl bravely. I am sure of one thing: we shall behave gallantly against these Northmen, if they attack us; but if our young people give way, and should not stand to it, let us not run farther than to that stream; but if they should give way farther, which I am sure they will not do, let it not be farther than to that hill." At that instant the Northmen sprang up, raised the war-cry, and struck on their shields; and the Gautland army began also to shout. The lagman's horse got shy with the war-cry, and backed so hard that the stake flew up and struck the lagman on the head. He said, "Ill luck to thee, Northman, for that arrow!" and away fled the lagman. King Harald had told his people, "If we do make a clash with the weapons, we shall not however, go down from the hill until they come nearer to us;" and they did so. When the war-cry was raised the earl let his banner advance; but when they came under the hill the king's army rushed down upon them, and killed some of the earl's people, and the rest fled. The Northmen did not pursue the fugitives long, for it was the fall of day; but they took Earl Hakon's banner and all the arms and clothes they could get hold of. King Harald had both the banners carried before him as they marched away. They spoke among themselves that the earl had probably fallen. As they were riding through the forest they could only ride singly, one following the other. Suddenly a man came full gallop across the path, struck his spear through him who was carrying the earl's banner, seized the banner-staff, and rode into the forest on the other side with the banner. When this was told the king he said, "Bring me my armour, for the earl is alive." Then the king rode to his ships in the night; and many said that the earl had now taken his revenge. But Thiodolf sang thus:—

Steinkel's troops, who were so bold,
Who the Earl Hakon would uphold,
Were driven by our horsemen's power
To Hel, death goddess, in an hour;
And the great earl, so men say
Who won't admit he ran away,
Because his men fled from the ground,
Retired, and cannot now be found.

75. DEATH OF HAL, THE MURDERER OF KODRAN.

The rest of the night Harald passed in his ships; but in the morning, when it was daylight, it was found that so thick ice had gathered about the vessels that one could walk around them. The king ordered his men to cut the ice from the ships all the way out to the clear water; on which they all went to break the ice. King Harald's son, Magnus, steered the vessel that lay lowest down the river and nearest the water. When the people had cleared the ice away almost entirely, a man ran out to the ice, and began hewing away at it like a madman. Then said one of the men, "It is going now as usual, that none can do so much as Hal who killed Kodran, when once he lays himself to the work. See how he is hewing away at the ice." There was a man in the crew of Magnus, the king's son, who was called Thormod Eindridason; and when he heard the name of Kodran's murderer he ran up to Hal, and gave him a death-wound. Kodran was a son of Gudmund Eyjolfson; and Valgerd, who was a sister of Gudmund, was the mother of Jorun, and the grandmother by the mother's side of this Thormod. Thormod was a year old when Kodran was killed, and had never seen Hal Utrygson until now. When the ice was broken all the way out to the water, Magnus drew his ship out, set sail directly, and sailed westward across the lake; but the king's ship, which lay farthest up the river, came out the last. Hal had been in the king's retinue, and was very dear to him; so that the king was enraged at his death. The king came the last into the harbour, and Magnus had let the murderer escape into the forest, and offered to pay the mulct for him; and the king had very nearly attacked Magnus and his crew, but their friends came up and reconciled them.

76. OF KING HARALD.

That winter (A.D. 1065) King Harald went up to Raumarike, and had many people with him; and he accused the bondes there of having kept from him his scat and duties, and of having aided his enemies to raise disturbance against him. He seized on the bondes and maimed some, killed others, and robbed many of all their property. They who could do it fled from him. He burned everything in the districts and laid them altogether waste. So says Thiodolf:—

He who the island-people drove,
When they against his power strove,
Now bridle's Raumarike's men,
Marching his forces through their glen.
To punish them the fire he lights
That shines afar off in dark nights
From house and yard, and, as he says,
Will warn the man who disobeys.

Thereafter the king went up to Hedemark, burnt the dwellings, and made no less waste and havoc there than in Raumarike. From thence he went to Hadeland and Ringerike, burning and ravaging all the land. So says Thiodolf:—

The bonde's household goods are seen
Before his door upon the green,
Smoking and singed: and sparks red hot
Glow in the thatched roof of his cot.
In Hedemark the bondes pray
The king his crushing hand to stay;
In Ringerike and Hadeland,
None 'gainst his fiery wrath can stand.

Then the bondes left all to the king's mercy. After the death of King Magnus fifteen years had passed when the battle at Nisriver took place, and afterwards two years elapsed before Harald and Svein made peace. So says Thiodolf:—

The Hordland king under the land
At anchor lay close to the strand,
At last, prepared with shield and spear
The peace was settled the third year.

After this peace the disturbances with the people of the Upland districts lasted a year and a half. So says Thiodolf:—

No easy task it is to say
How the king brought beneath his sway
The Upland bondes, and would give
Nought but their ploughs from which to live.
The king in eighteen months brought down

Their bonde power, and raised his own,
And the great honour he has gained
Will still in memory be retained.

77. OF THE KINGS OF ENGLAND.

Edward, Ethelred's son, was king of England after his brother Hardacanute. He was called Edward the Good; and so he was. King Edward's mother was Queen Emma, daughter of Richard, earl of Rouen. Her brother was Earl Robert, whose son was William the Bastard, who at that time was earl at Rouen in Normandy. King Edward's queen was Gyda, a daughter of Earl Godwin, the son of Ulfnad. Gyda's brothers were, Earl Toste, the eldest; Earl Morukare the next; Earl Walter the third; Earl Svein the fourth; and the fifth was Harald, who was the youngest, and he was brought up at King Edward's court, and was his foster-son. The king loved him very much, and kept him as his own son; for he had no children.

78. OF HARALD GODWINSON.

One summer it happened that Harald, the son of Godwin, made an expedition to Bretland with his ships, but when they got to sea they met a contrary wind, and were driven off into the ocean. They landed west in Normandy, after suffering from a dangerous storm. They brought up at Rouen, where they met Earl William, who received Harald and his company gladly. Harald remained there late in harvest, and was hospitably entertained; for the stormy weather continued, and there was no getting to sea, and this continued until winter set in; so the earl and Harald agreed that he should remain there all winter. Harald sat on the high-seat on one side of the earl; and on the other side sat the earl's wife, one of the most beautiful women that could be seen. They often talked together for amusement at the drinking-table; and the earl went generally to bed, but Harald and the earl's wife sat long in the evenings talking together, and so it went on for a great part of the winter. In one of their conversations she said to Harald, "The earl has asked me what it is we have to talk about so much, for he is angry at it." Harald replies, "We shall then at once let him know all our conversation." The following day, Harald asked the earl to a conference, and they went together into the conference-chamber; where also the queen was, and some of the councillors. Then Harald began thus:—"I have to inform you, earl, that there lies more in my visit here than I have let you know. I would ask your daughter in marriage, and have often spoke over this matter with her mother, and she has promised to support my suit with you." As soon as Harald had made known this proposal of his, it was well received by all who were present. They explained the case to the earl; and at last it came so far that the earl was contracted to Harald, but as she was very young, it was resolved that the wedding should be deferred for some years.

79. KING EDWARD'S DEATH.

When spring came Harald rigged his ships and set off; and he and the earl parted with great friendship. Harald sailed over to England to King Edward, but did not return to Valland to fulfill the marriage agreement. Edward was king over England for twenty-three years and died on a bed of sickness in London on the 5th of January, and was buried in Paul's church. Englishmen call him a saint.

80. HARALD GODWINSON MADE KING OF ENGLAND.

The sons of Earl Godwin were the most powerful men in England. Toste was made chief of the English king's army, and was his land-defence man when the king began to grow old; and he was also placed above all the other earls. His brother Harald was always with the court itself, and nearest to the king in all service, and had the charge of the king's treasure-chamber. It is said that when the king was approaching his last hour, Harald and a few others were with him. Harald first leans down over the king, and then said, "I take you all to witness that the king has now given me the kingdom, and all the realm of England;" and then the king was taken dead out of the bed. The same day there was a meeting of the chiefs, at which there was some talk of choosing a king; and

then Harald brought forward his witnesses that King Edward had given him the kingdom on his dying day. The meeting ended by choosing Harald as king, and he was consecrated and crowned the 13th day of Yule, in Paul's church. Then all the chiefs and all the people submitted to him. Now when his brother, Earl Toste, heard of this he took it very ill, as he thought himself quite as well entitled to be king. "I want," said he, "that the principal men of the country choose him whom they think best fitted for it." And sharp words passed between the brothers. King Harald says he will not give up his kingly dignity, for he is seated on the throne which kings sat upon, and is anointed and consecrated a king. On his side also was the strength of the people, for he had the king's whole treasure.

81. EARL TOSTE'S EXPEDITION TO DENMARK.

Now when King Harald perceived that his brother Toste wanted to have him deprived of the kingdom he did not trust him; for Toste was a clever man, and a great warrior, and was in friendship with the principal men of the country. He therefore took the command of the army from Toste, and also all the power he had beyond that of the other earls of the country. Earl Toste, again, would not submit to be his own brother's serving man; therefore he went with his people over the sea to Flanders, and stayed there awhile, then went to Friesland, and from thence to Denmark to his relation King Svein. Earl Ulf, King Svein's father, and Gyda, Earl Toste's mother, were brother's and sister's children. The earl now asked King Svein for support and help of men; and King Svein invited him to stay with him, with the promise that he should get so large an earldom in Denmark that he would be an important chief.

The earl replies, "My inclination is to go back to my estate in England; but if I cannot get help from you for that purpose, I will agree to help you with all the power I can command in England, if you will go there with the Danish army, and win the country, as Canute, your mother's brother, did."

The king replied, "So much smaller a man am I than Canute the Great, that I can with difficulty defend my own Danish dominions against the Northmen. King Canute, on the other hand, got the Danish kingdom in heritage, took England by slash and blow, and sometimes was near losing his life in the contest; and Norway he took without slash or blow. Now it suits me much better to be guided by my own slender ability than to imitate my relation, King Canute's, lucky hits."

Then Earl Toste said, "The result of my errand here is less fortunate than I expected of thee who art so gallant a man, seeing that thy relative is in so great need. It may be that I will seek friendly help where it could less be expected; and that I may find a chief who is less afraid, king, than thou art of a great enterprise."

Then the king and the earl parted, not just the best friends.

82. EARL TOSTE'S EXPEDITION TO NORWAY.

Earl Toste turned away then and went to Norway, where he presented himself to King Harald, who was at that time in Viken. When they met the earl explained his errand to the king. He told him all his proceedings since he left England, and asked his aid to recover his dominions in England.

The king replied that the Northmen had no great desire for a campaign in England, and to have English chiefs over them there. "People say," added he, "that the English are not to be trusted."

The earl replied, "Is it true what I have heard people tell in England, that thy relative, King Magnus, sent men to King Edward with the message that King Magnus had right to England as well as to Denmark, and had got that heritage after Hardacanute, in consequence of a regular agreement?"

The king replied, "How came it that he did not get it, if he had a right to it?"

"Why," replied the earl, "hast thou not Denmark, as King Magnus, thy predecessor, had it?"

The king replies, "The Danes have nothing to brag of over us Northmen; for many a place have we laid in ashes to thy relations."

Then said the earl, "If thou wilt not tell me, I will tell thee. Magnus subdued Denmark, because all the chiefs of the country helped him; and thou hast not done it, because all the people of the country were against thee. Therefore, also, King Magnus did not strive for England, because all the nation would have Edward for king. Wilt thou take England now? I will bring the matter so far that most of the principal men in England shall be thy friends, and assist thee; for nothing is wanting to place me at the side of my brother Harald but the king's name. All men allow that there never was such a warrior in the northern lands as thou art; and it appears to me extraordinary that thou hast been fighting for fifteen years for Denmark, and wilt not take England that lies open to thee."

King Harald weighed carefully the earl's words, and perceived at once that there was truth in much of what he said; and he himself had also a great desire to acquire dominions. Then King Harald and the earl talked long and frequently together; and at last he took the resolution to proceed in summer to England, and conquer the country. King Harald sent a message-token through all Norway and ordered out a levy of one-half of all the men in Norway able to carry arms. When this became generally known, there were many guesses about what might be the end of this expedition. Some reckoned up King Harald's great achievements, and thought he was also the man who could accomplish this. Others, again, said that England was difficult to attack; that it was very full of people; and the men-at-arms, who were called Thingmen, were so brave, that one of them was better than two of Harald's best men. Then said Ulf the marshal:—

I am still ready gold to gain;
But truly it would be in vain,
And the king's marshal in the hall
Might leave his good post once for all,
If two of us in any strife
Must for one Thingman fly for life,
My lovely Norse maid, in my youth
We thought the opposite the truth.

Ulf the marshal died that spring (A.D. 1066). King Harald stood over his grave, and said, as he was leaving it, "There lies now the truest of men, and the most devoted to his king."

Earl Toste sailed in spring west to Flanders, to meet the people who had left England with him, and others besides who had gathered to him both out of England and Flanders.

83. GYRD'S DREAMS.

King Harald's fleet assembled at the Solunds. When King Harald was ready to leave Nidaros he went to King Olaf's shrine, unlocked it, clipped his hair and nails, and locked the shrine again, and threw the keys into the Nid. Some say he threw them overboard outside of Agdanes; and since then the shrine of Saint Olaf, the king, has never been opened. Thirty-five years had passed since he was slain; and he lived thirty-five years here on earth (A.D. 1080-1066). King Harald sailed with his ships he had about him to the south to meet his people, and a great fleet was collected; so that, according to the people's reckoning, King Harald had nearly 200 ships beside provision-ships and small craft.

While they lay at the Solunds a man called Gyrð, on board the king's ship, had a dream. He thought he was standing in the king's ship and saw a great witch-wife standing on the island, with a fork in one hand and a trough in the other. He thought also that he saw over all the fleet, and that a fowl was sitting upon every ship's stern, and that these fowls were all ravens or ernes; and the witch-wife sang this song:—

From the east I'll 'tice the king,
To the west the king I'll bring;
Many a noble bone will be
Ravens o'er Giuke's ship are fitting,
Eyeing the prey they think most fitting.
Upon the stem I'll sail with them!
Upon the stem I'll sail with them!

84. THORD'S DREAM.

There was also a man called Thord, in a ship which lay not far from the king's. He dreamt one night that he saw King Harald's fleet coming to land, and he knew the land to be England. He saw

a great battle-array on the land; and he thought both sides began to fight, and had many banners flapping in the air. And before the army of the people of the country was riding a huge witch-wife upon a wolf; and the wolf had a man's carcass in his mouth, and the blood was dropping from his jaws; and when he had eaten up one body she threw another into his mouth, and so one after another, and he swallowed them all. And she sang thus:—

Skade's eagle eyes
The king's ill luck espies:
Though glancing shields
Hide the green fields,
The king's ill luck she spies.
To bode the doom of this great king,
The flesh of bleeding men I fling
To hairy jaw and hungry maw!
To hairy jaw and hungry maw!

85. KING HARALD'S DREAM.

King Harald also dreamt one night that he was in Nidaros, and met his brother, King Olaf, who sang to him these verses:—

In many a fight
My name was bright;
Men weep, and tell
How Olaf fell.
Thy death is near;
Thy corpse, I fear,
The crow will feed,
The witch-wife's steed.

Many other dreams and forebodings were then told of, and most of them gloomy. Before King Harald left Thronðhjelm, he let his son Magnus be proclaimed king and set him as king over Norway while he was absent. Thora, the daughter of Thorberg, also remained behind; but he took with him Queen Ellisif and her two daughters, Maria and Ingegerd. Olaf, King Harald's son, also accompanied his father abroad.

86. BATTLE AT SCARBOROUGH.

When King Harald was clear for sea, and the wind became favourable, he sailed out into the ocean; and he himself landed in Shetland, but a part of his fleet in the Orkney Islands. King Harald stopped but a short time in Shetland before sailing to Orkney, from whence he took with him a great armed force, and the earls Paul and Erlend, the sons of Earl Thorfin; but he left behind him here the Queen Ellisif, and her daughters Maria and Ingegerd. Then he sailed, leaving Scotland and England westward of him, and landed at a place called Klifland. There he went on shore and plundered, and brought the country in subjection to him without opposition. Then he brought up at Skardaburg, and fought with the people of the place. He went up a hill which is there, and made a great pile upon it, which he set on fire; and when the pile was in clear flame, his men took large forks and pitched the burning wood down into the town, so that one house caught fire after the other, and the town surrendered. The Northmen killed many people there and took all the booty they could lay hold of. There was nothing left for the Englishmen now, if they would preserve their lives, but to submit to King Harald; and thus he subdued the country wherever he came. Then the king proceeded south along the land, and brought up at Hellornes, where there came a force that had been assembled to oppose him, with which he had a battle, and gained the victory.

87. OF HARALD'S ORDER OF BATTLE.

Thereafter the king sailed to the Humber, and up along the river, and then he landed. Up in Jorvik were two earls, Earl Morukare, and his brother, Earl Valthiof, and they had an immense army. While the army of the earls was coming down from the upper part of the country, King Harald lay in the Usa. King Harald now went on the land, and drew up his men. The one arm of this line stood at the outer edge of the river, the other turned up towards the land along a ditch; and there was also a morass, deep, broad, and full of water. The earls let their army proceed slowly down along the river, with all their troops in line. The king's banner was next the river, where the line was thickest. It was thinnest at the ditch, where also the weakest of the men were. When the earls advanced downwards along the ditch, the arm of the Northmen's line which

was at the ditch gave way; and the Englishmen followed, thinking the Northmen would fly. The banner of Earl Morukare advanced then bravely.

88. THE BATTLE AT THE HUMBER.

When King Harald saw that the English array had come to the ditch against him, he ordered the charge to be sounded, and urged on his men. He ordered the banner which was called the Land-ravager to be carried before him, and made so severe an assault that all had to give way before it; and there was a great loss among the men of the earls, and they soon broke into flight, some running up the river, some down, and the most leaping into the ditch, which was so filled with dead that the Norsemen could go dry-foot over the fen. There Earl Morukare fell. So says Stein Herdison:—

The gallant Harald drove along,
Flying but fighting, the whole throng.
At last, confused, they could not fight,
And the whole body took to flight.
Up from the river's silent stream
At once rose desperate splash and scream;
But they who stood like men this fray
Round Morukare's body lay.

This song was composed by Stein Herdison about Olaf, son of King Harald; and he speaks of Olaf being in this battle with King Harald, his father. These things are also spoken of in the song called "Harald's Stave":—

Earl Valthiof's men
Lay in the fen,
By sword down hewed,
So thickly strewed,
That Norsemen say
They paved a way
Across the fen
For the brave Norsemen.

Earl Valthiof, and the people who escaped, fled up to the castle of York; and there the greatest loss of men had been. This battle took place upon the Wednesday next Mathias' day (A.D. 1066).

89. OF EARL TOSTE.

Earl Toste had come from Flanders to King Harald as soon as he arrived in England, and the earl was present at all these battles. It happened, as he had foretold the king at their first meeting, that in England many people would flock to them, as being friends and relations of Earl Toste, and thus the king's forces were much strengthened. After the battle now told of, all people in the nearest districts submitted to Harald, but some fled. Then the king advanced to take the castle, and laid his army at Stanforda-bryggiur (Stamford Bridge); and as King Harald had gained so great a victory against so great chiefs and so great an army, the people were dismayed, and doubted if they could make any opposition. The men of the castle therefore determined, in a council, to send a message to King Harald, and deliver up the castle into his power. All this was soon settled; so that on Sunday the king proceeded with the whole army to the castle, and appointed a Thing of the people without the castle, at which the people of the castle were to be present. At this Thing all the people accepted the condition of submitting to Harald, and gave him, as hostages, the children of the most considerable persons; for Earl Toste was well acquainted with all the people of that town. In the evening the king returned down to his ships, after this victory achieved with his own force, and was very merry. A Thing was appointed within the castle early on Monday morning, and then King Harald was to name officers to rule over the town, to give out laws, and bestow fiefs. The same evening, after sunset, King Harald Godwinson came from the south to the castle with a numerous army, and rode into the city with the good-will and consent of the people of the castle. All the gates and walls were beset so that the Northmen could receive no intelligence, and the army remained all night in the town.

90. OF KING HARALD'S LANDING.

On Monday, when King Harald Sigurdson had taken breakfast, he ordered the trumpets to sound for going on shore. The army accordingly got ready, and he divided the men into the parties who

should go, and who should stay behind. In every division he allowed two men to land, and one to remain behind. Earl Toste and his retinue prepared to land with King Harald; and, for watching the ships, remained behind the king's son Olaf; the earls of Orkney, Paul and Erlend; and also Eystein Orre, a son of Thorberg Arnason, who was the most able and best beloved by the king of all the lendenmen, and to whom the king had promised his daughter Maria. The weather was uncommonly fine, and it was hot sunshine. The men therefore laid aside their armour, and went on the land only with their shields, helmets and spears, and girt with swords; and many had also arrows and bows, and all were very merry. Now as they came near the castle a great army seemed coming against them, and they saw a cloud of dust as from horses' feet, and under it shining shields and bright armour. The king halted his people, and called to him Earl Toste, and asked him what army this could be. The earl replied that he thought it most likely to be a hostile army, but possibly it might be some of his relations who were seeking for mercy and friendship, in order to obtain certain peace and safety from the king. Then the king said, "We must all halt, to discover what kind of a force this is." They did so; and the nearer this force came the greater it appeared, and their shining arms were to the sight like glancing ice.

91. OF EARL TOSTE'S COUNSEL.

Then said King Harald, "Let us now fall upon some good sensible counsel; for it is not to be concealed that this is an hostile army and the king himself without doubt is here."

Then said the earl, "The first counsel is to turn about as fast as we can to our ships to get our men and our weapons, and then we will make a defence according to our ability; or otherwise let our ships defend us, for there these horsemen have no power over us."

Then King Harald said, "I have another counsel. Put three of our best horses under three of our briskest lads and let them ride with all speed to tell our people to come quickly to our relief. The Englishmen shall have a hard fray of it before we give ourselves up for lost."

The earl said the king must order in this, as in all things, as he thought best; adding, at the same time, it was by no means his wish to fly. Then King Harald ordered his banner Land-ravager to be set up; and Frirek was the name of him who bore the banner.

92. OF KING HARALD'S ARMY.

Then King Harald arranged his army, and made the line of battle long, but not deep. He bent both wings of it back, so that they met together; and formed a wide ring equally thick all round, shield to shield, both in the front and rear ranks. The king himself and his retinue were within the circle; and there was the banner, and a body of chosen men. Earl Toste, with his retinue, was at another place, and had a different banner. The army was arranged in this way, because the king knew that horsemen were accustomed to ride forwards with great vigour, but to turn back immediately. Now the king ordered that his own and the earl's attendants should ride forwards where it was most required. "And our bowmen," said he, "shall be near to us; and they who stand in the first rank shall set the spear-shaft on the ground, and the spear-point against the horseman's breast, if he rides at them; and those who stand in the second rank shall set the spear-point against the horse's breast."

93. OF KING HARALD GODWINSON.

King Harald Godwinson had come with an immense army, both of cavalry and infantry. Now King Harald Sigurdson rode around his array, to see how every part was drawn up. He was upon a black horse, and the horse stumbled under him, so that the king fell off. He got up in haste and said, "A fall is lucky for a traveller."

The English king Harald said to the Northmen who were with him, "Do ye know the stout man who fell from his horse, with the blue kirtle and the beautiful helmet?"

"That is the king himself," said they.

The English king said, "A great man, and of stately appearance is he; but I think his luck has left him."

94. OF THE TROOP OF THE NOBILITY.

Twenty horsemen rode forward from the Thing-men's troops against the Northmen's array; and all of them, and likewise their horses, were clothed in armour.

One of the horsemen said, "Is Earl Toste in this army?"

The earl answered, "It is not to be denied that ye will find him here."

The horseman says, "Thy brother, King Harald, sends thee salutation, with the message that thou shalt have the whole of Northumberland; and rather than thou shouldst not submit to him, he will give thee the third part of his kingdom to rule over along with himself."

The earl replies, "This is something different from the enmity and scorn he offered last winter; and if this had been offered then it would have saved many a man's life who now is dead, and it would have been better for the kingdom of England. But if I accept of this offer, what will he give King Harald Sigurdson for his trouble?"

The horseman replied, "He has also spoken of this; and will give him seven feet of English ground, or as much more as he may be taller than other men."

"Then," said the earl, "go now and tell King Harald to get ready for battle; for never shall the Northmen say with truth that Earl Toste left King Harald Sigurdson to join his enemy's troops, when he came to fight west here in England. We shall rather all take the resolution to die with honour, or to gain England by a victory."

Then the horseman rode back.

King Harald Sigurdson said to the earl, "Who was the man who spoke so well?"

The earl replied, "That was King Harald Godwinson."

Then, said King Harald Sigurdson, "That was by far too long concealed from me; for they had come so near to our army, that this Harald should never have carried back the tidings of our men's slaughter."

Then said the earl, "It was certainly imprudent for such chiefs, and it may be as you say; but I saw he was going to offer me peace and a great dominion, and that, on the other hand, I would be his murderer if I betrayed him; and I would rather he should be my murderer than I his, if one of two be to die."

King Harald Sigurdson observed to his men, "That was but a little man, yet he sat firmly in his stirrups."

It is said that Harald made these verses at this time:—

Advance! advance!
No helmets glance,
But blue swords play
In our array.
Advance! advance!
No mail-coats glance,
But hearts are here
That ne'er knew fear.

His coat of mail was called Emma; and it was so long that it reached almost to the middle of his leg, and so strong that no weapon ever pierced it. Then said King Harald Sigurdson, "These verses are but ill composed; I must try to make better;" and he composed the following:—

In battle storm we seek no lee,
With skulking head, and bending knee,
Behind the hollow shield.
With eye and hand we fend the head;
Courage and skill stand in the stead
Of panzer, helm, and shield,
In hild's bloody field.

Thereupon Thiodolf sang:—

And should our king in battle fall,—
A fate that God may give to all,—
His sons will vengeance take;
And never shone the sun upon
Two nobler eaglet; in his run,
And them we'll never forsake.

95. OF THE BEGINNING OF THE BATTLE.

Now the battle began. The Englishmen made a hot assault upon the Northmen, who sustained it bravely. It was no easy matter for the English to ride against the Northmen on account of their spears; therefore they rode in a circle around them. And the fight

at first was but loose and light, as long as the Northmen kept their order of battle; for although the English rode hard against the Northmen, they gave way again immediately, as they could do nothing against them. Now when the Northmen thought they perceived that the enemy were making but weak assaults, they set after them, and would drive them into flight; but when they had broken their shield-rampart the Englishmen rode up from all sides, and threw arrows and spears on them. Now when King Harald Sigurdson saw this, he went into the fray where the greatest crash of weapons was, and there was a sharp conflict, in which many people fell on both sides. King Harald then was in a rage, and ran out in front of the array, and hewed down with both hands; so that neither helmet nor armour could withstand him, and all who were nearest gave way before him. It was then very near with the English that they had taken to flight. So says Arnor, the earls' skald:—

Where battle-storm was ringing,
Where arrow-cloud was singing,
Harald stood there,
Of armour bare,
His deadly sword still swinging.
The foeman feel its bite;
His Norsemen rush to fight,
Danger to share,
With Harald there,
Where steel on steel was ringing.

96. FALL OF KING HARALD.

King Harald Sigurdson was hit by an arrow in the windpipe, and that was his death-wound. He fell, and all who had advanced with him, except those who retired with the banner. There was afterwards the warmest conflict, and Earl Toste had taken charge of the king's banner. They began on both sides to form their array again, and for a long time there was a pause in fighting. Then Thiodolf sang these verses:—

The army stands in hushed dismay;
Stilled is the clamour of the fray.
Harald is dead, and with him goes
The spirit to withstand our foes.
A bloody scat the folk must pay
For their king's folly on this day.
He fell; and now, without disguise,
We say this business was not wise.

But before the battle began again Harald Godwinson offered his brother, Earl Toste, peace, and also quarter to the Northmen who were still alive; but the Northmen called out, all of them together, that they would rather fall, one across the other, than accept of quarter from the Englishmen. Then each side set up a war-shout, and the battle began again. So says Arnor, the earls' skald:—

The king, whose name would ill-doers scare,
The gold-tipped arrow would not spare.
Unhelmed, unpanzered, without shield,
He fell among us in the field.
The gallant men who saw him fall
Would take no quarter; one and all
Resolved to die with their loved king,
Around his corpse in a corpse-ring.

97. SKIRMISH OF ORRE.

Eystein Orre came up at this moment from the ships with the men who followed him, and all were clad in armour. Then Eystein got King Harald's banner Land-ravager; and now was, for the third time, one of the sharpest of conflicts, in which many Englishmen fell, and they were near to taking flight. This conflict is called Orre's storm. Eystein and his men had hastened so fast from the ships that they were quite exhausted, and scarcely fit to fight before they came into the battle; but afterwards they became so furious, that they did not guard themselves with their shields as long as they could stand upright. At last they threw off their coats of ringmail, and then the Englishmen could easily lay their blows at them; and many fell from weariness, and died without a wound. Thus almost all the chief men fell among the Norway people. This happened towards evening; and then it went, as one might expect, that all had not the same fate, for many fled, and were lucky enough to escape in various ways; and darkness fell before the slaughter was altogether ended.

98. OF STYRKAR THE MARSHAL.

Styrkar, King Harald Sigurdson's marshal, a gallant man, escaped upon a horse, on which he rode away in the evening. It was blowing a cold wind, and Styrkar had not much other clothing upon him but his shirt, and had a helmet on his head, and a drawn sword in his hand. As soon as his weariness was over, he began to feel cold. A waggoner met him in a lined skin-coat. Styrkar asks him, "Wilt thou sell thy coat, friend?"

"Not to thee," says the peasant: "thou art a Northman; that I can hear by thy tongue."

Styrkar replies, "If I were a Northman, what wouldst thou do?"

"I would kill thee," replied the peasant; "but as ill luck would have it, I have no weapon just now by me that would do it."

Then Styrkar says, "As you can't kill me, friend, I shall try if I can't kill you." And with that he swung his sword, and struck him on the neck, so that his head came off. He then took the skin-coat, sprang on his horse, and rode down to the strand.

Olaf Haraldson had not gone on land with the others, and when he heard of his father's fall he made ready to sail away with the men who remained.

99. OF WILLIAM THE BASTARD.

When the Earl of Rouen, William the Bastard, heard of his relation, King Edward's, death, and also that Harald Godwinson was chosen, crowned, and consecrated king of England, it appeared to him that he had a better right to the kingdom of England than Harald, by reason of the relationship between him and King Edward. He thought, also, that he had grounds for avenging the affront that Harald had put upon him with respect to his daughter. From all these grounds William gathered together a great army in Normandy, and had many men, and sufficient transport-shipping. The day that he rode out of the castle to his ships, and had mounted his horse, his wife came to him, and wanted to speak with him; but when he saw her he struck at her with his heel, and set his spurs so deep into her breast that she fell down dead; and the earl rode on to his ships, and went with his ships over to England. His brother, Archbishop Otto, was with him; and when the earl came to England he began to plunder, and take possession of the land as he came along. Earl William was stouter and stronger than other men; a great horseman and warrior, but somewhat stern; and a very sensible man, but not considered a man to be relied on.

100. FALL OF KING HARALD GODWINSON.

King Harald Godwinson gave King Harald Sigurdson's son Olaf leave to go away, with the men who had followed him and had not fallen in battle; but he himself turned round with his army to go south, for he had heard that William the Bastard was overwhelming the south of England with a vast army, and was subduing the country for himself. With King Harald went his brothers Svein and Gyrð, and Earl Valthiof. King Harald and Earl William met each other south in England at Helsingja-port (Hastings). There was a great battle in which King Harald and his brother Earl Gyrð and a great part of his men fell. This was the nineteenth day after the fall of King Harald Sigurdson. Harald's brother, Earl Valthiof, escaped by flight, and towards evening fell in with a division of William's people, consisting of 100 men; and when they saw Earl Valthiof's troop they fled to a wood. Earl Valthiof set fire to the wood, and they were all burnt. So says Thorkel Skallason in Valthiof's ballad:—

Earl Valthiof the brave
His foes a warning gave:
Within the blazing grove
A hundred men he drove.
The wolf will soon return,
And the witch's horse will burn
Her sharp claws in the ash,
To taste the Frenchman's flesh.

101. EARL VALTHIOF'S DEATH.

William was proclaimed king of England. He sent a message to Earl Valthiof that they should be reconciled, and gave him assurance of safety to come to the place of meeting. The earl set out

with a few men; but when he came to a heath north of Kastalabryggia, there met him two officers of King William, with many followers, who took him prisoner, put him in fetters, and afterwards he was beheaded; and the English call him a saint. Thorkel tells of this:—

William came o'er the sea,
With bloody sword came he:
Cold heart and bloody hand
Now rule the English land.
Earl Valthiof he slew,—
Valthiof the brave and true.
Cold heart and bloody hand
Now rule the English land.

William was after this king of England for twenty-one years, and his descendants have been so ever since.

102. OF OLAF HARALDSON'S EXPEDITION TO NORWAY.

Olaf, the son of King Harald Sigurdson, sailed with his fleet from England from Hrafnseyr, and came in autumn to the Orkney Isles, where the event had happened that Maria, a daughter of Harald Sigurdson, died a sudden death the very day and hour her father, King Harald, fell. Olaf remained there all winter; but the summer after he proceeded east to Norway, where he was proclaimed king along with his brother Magnus. Queen Ellisif came from the West, along with her stepson Olaf and her daughter Ingegerd. There came also with Olaf over the West sea Skule, a son of Earl Toste, and who since has been called the king's foster-son, and his brother Ketil Krok. Both were gallant men, of high family in England, and both were very intelligent; and the brothers were much beloved by King Olaf. Ketil Krok went north to Halogaland, where King Olaf procured him a good marriage, and from him are descended many great people. Skule, the king's foster-son, was a very clever man, and the handsomest man that could be seen. He was the commander of King Olaf's court-men, spoke at the Things and took part in all the country affairs with the king. The king offered to give Skule whatever district in Norway he liked, with all the income and duties that belonged to the king in it. Skule thanked him very much for the offer, but said he would rather have something else from him. "For if there came a shift of kings," said he, "the gift might come to nothing. I would rather take some properties lying near to the merchant towns, where you, sire, usually take up your abode, and then I would enjoy your Yule-feasts." The king agreed to this, and conferred on him lands eastward at Konungahella, Oslo, Tunsberg, Sarpsborg, Bergen, and north at Nidaros. These were nearly the best properties at each place, and have since descended to the family branches which came from Skule. King Olaf gave Skule his female relative, Gudrun, the daughter of Nefstein, in marriage. Her mother was Ingerid, a daughter of Sigurd Syr and Asta, King Olaf the Saint's mother. Ingerid was a sister of King Olaf the Saint and of King Harald. Skule and Gudrun's son was Asolf of Reine, who married Thora, a daughter of Skopte Ogmundson; Asolf's and Thora's son was Guthorm of Reine, father of Bard, and grandfather of King Inge and of Duke Skule.

103. OF KING HARALD SIGURDSON.

One year after King Harald's fall his body was transported from England north to Nidaros, and was buried in Mary church, which he had built. It was a common observation that King Harald distinguished himself above all other men by wisdom and resources of mind; whether he had to take a resolution suddenly for himself and others, or after long deliberation. He was, also, above all other men, bold, brave, and lucky, until his dying day, as above related; and bravery is half victory. So says Thiodolf:—

Harald, who till his dying day
Came off the best in many a fray,
Had one good rule in battle-plain,
In Seeland and elsewhere, to gain—
That, be his foes' strength more or less,
Courage is always half success.

King Harald was a handsome man, of noble appearance; his hair and beard yellow. He had a short beard, and long mustaches.

The one eyebrow was somewhat higher than the other. He had large hands and feet; but these were well made. His height was five ells. He was stern and severe to his enemies, and avenged cruelly all opposition or misdeed. So says Thiodolf:—

Severe alike to friends or foes,
Who dared his royal will oppose;
Severe in discipline to hold
His men-at-arms wild and bold;
Severe the bondes to repress;
Severe to punish all excess;
Severe was Harald—but we call
That just which was alike to all.

King Harald was most greedy of power, and of all distinction and honour. He was bountiful to the friends who suited him. So says Thiodolf:—

I got from him, in sea-fight strong,
A mark of gold for my ship-song,
Merit in any way
He generously would pay.

King Harald was fifty years old when he fell. We have no particular account of his youth before he was fifteen years old, when he was with his brother, King Olaf, at the battle of Stiklestad. He lived thirty-five years after that, and in all that time was never free from care and war. King Harald never fled from battle, but often tried cunning ways to escape when he had to do with great superiority of forces. All the men who followed King Harald in battle or skirmish said that when he stood in great danger, or anything came suddenly upon him, he always took that course which all afterwards saw gave the best hope of a fortunate issue.

104. KING HARALD AND KING OLAF COMPARED.

When Haldor, a son of Brynjolf Ulfalde the Old, who was a sensible man and a great chief, heard people talk of how unlike the brothers Saint Olaf and King Harald were in disposition, he used to say, "I was in great friendship with both the brothers, and I knew intimately the dispositions of both, and never did I know two men more like in disposition. Both were of the highest understanding, and bold in arms, and greedy of power and property; of great courage, but not acquainted with the way of winning the favour of the people; zealous in governing, and severe in their revenge. King Olaf forced the people into Christianity and good customs, and punished cruelly those who disobeyed. This just and rightful severity the chiefs of the country could not bear, but raised an army against him, and killed him in his own kingdom; and therefore he is held to be a saint. King Harald, again, marauded to obtain glory and power, forced all the people he could under his power, and died in another king's dominions. Both brothers, in daily life, were of a worthy and considerate manner of living; they were of great experience, and very laborious, and were known and celebrated far and wide for these qualities."

105. KING MAGNUS'S DEATH.

King Magnus Haraldson ruled over Norway the first winter after King Harald's death (A.D. 1067), and afterwards two years (A.D. 1068-1069) along with his brother, King Olaf. Thus there were two kings of Norway at that time; and Magnus had the northern and Olaf the eastern part of the country. King Magnus had a son called Hakon, who was fostered by Thoror of Steig in Gudbrandsdal, who was a brother of King Magnus by the mother's side; and Hakon was a most agreeable man.

After King Harald Sigurdson's death the Danish king Svein let it be known that the peace between the Northmen and the Danes was at an end, and insisted that the league between Harald and Svein was not for longer time than their lives. There was a levy in both kingdoms. Harald's sons called out the whole people in Norway for procuring men and ships, and Svein set out from the south with the Danish army. Messengers then went between with proposals for a peace; and the Northmen said they would either have the same league as was concluded between King Harald and Svein, or otherwise give battle instantly on the spot. Verses were made on this occasion, viz.:—

Ready for war or peace,
King Olaf will not cease
From foeman's hand
To guard his land.

So says also Stein Herdison in his song of Olaf:—

From Thronhjelm town, where in repose
The holy king defies his foes,
Another Olaf will defend
His kingdom from the greedy Svein.
King Olaf had both power and right,
And the Saint's favour in the fight.
The Saint will ne'er his kin forsake,
And let Svein Ulfson Norway take.

In this manner friendship was concluded between the kings and peace between the countries. King Magnus fell ill and died of the ringworm disease, after being ill for some time. He died and was buried at Nidaros. He was an amiable king and bewailed by the people.

SAGA OF OLAF KYRRE.

1. OLAF'S PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

Olaf remained sole king of Norway after the death (A.D. 1069) of his brother King Magnus. Olaf was a stout man, well grown in limbs; and every one said a handsomer man could not be seen, nor of a nobler appearance. His hair was yellow as silk, and became him well; his skin was white and fine over all his body; his eyes beautiful, and his limbs well proportioned. He was rather silent in general, and did not speak much even at Things; but he was merry in drinking parties. He loved drinking much, and was talkative enough then; but quite peaceful. He was cheerful in conversation, peacefully inclined during all his reign, and loving gentleness and moderation in all things. Stein Herdison speaks thus of him:—

Our Thronhjelm king is brave and wise,
His love of peace our bondes prize;
By friendly word and ready hand
He holds good peace through every land.
He is for all a lucky star;
England he frightens from a war;
The stiff-necked Danes he drives to peace;
Troubles by his good influence cease.

2. OF KING OLAF'S MANNER OF LIVING.

It was the fashion in Norway in old times for the king's high-seat to be on the middle of a long bench, and the ale was handed across the fire; but King Olaf had his high-seat made on a high bench across the room; he also first had chimney-places in the rooms, and the floors strewed both summer and winter. In King Olaf's time many merchant towns arose in Norway, and many new ones were founded. Thus King Olaf founded a merchant town at Bergen, where very soon many wealthy people settled themselves, and it was regularly frequented by merchants from foreign lands. He had the foundations laid for the large Christ church, which was to be a stone church; but in his time there was little done to it. Besides, he completed the old Christ church, which was of wood. King Olaf also had a great feasting-house built in Nidaros, and in many other merchant towns, where before there were only private feasts; and in his time no one could drink in Norway but in these houses, adorned for the purpose with branches and leaves, and which stood under the king's protection. The great guild-bell in Thronhjelm, which was called the pride of the town, tolled to call together to these guilds. The guild-brethren built Margaret's church in Nidaros of stone. In King Olaf's time there were general entertainments and hand-in-hand feasts. At this time also much unusual splendour and foreign customs and fashions in the cut of clothes were introduced; as, for instance, costly hose plaited about the legs. Some had gold rings about the legs, and also used coats which had lists down the sides, and arms five ells long, and so narrow that they must be drawn up with ties, and lay in folds all the way up to the shoulders. The shoes were high, and all edged with silk, or even with gold. Many other kinds of wonderful ornaments were used at that time.

3. FASHION OF KING OLAF'S COURT.

King Olaf used the fashion, which was introduced from the courts of foreign kings, of letting his grand-butler stand at the end of the table, and fill the table-cups for himself and the other distinguished guests who sat at the table. He had also torch-bearers, who held as many candles at the table as there were guests of distinction present. There was also a marshal's bench outside of the table-circle, where the marshal and other persons of distinction sat with their faces towards the high-seat. King Harald, and the kings before him, used to drink out of deer-horn; and the ale was handed from the high-seat to the otherside over the fire, and he drank to the memory of any one he thought of. So says Stuf the skald:—

He who in battle is the first,
And now in peace is best to trust,
A welcome, hearty and sincere,
Gave to me on my coming here.
He whom the ravens watch with care,
He who the gold rings does not spare,
A golden horn full to the brink
Gave me himself at Haug to drink.

4. ARRANGEMENT OF KING OLAF'S COURT.

King Olaf had 120 courtmen-at-arms, and 60 pursuivants, besides 60 house-servants, who provided what was wanted for the king's house wherever it might be, or did other work required for the king. When the bondes asked why he kept a greater retinue than the law allowed, or former kings kept when they went in guest-quarters or feasts which the bondes had to provide for them, the king answered, "It does not happen that I rule the kingdom better, or produce greater respect for me than ye had for my father, although I have one-half more people than he had. I do not by any means do it merely to plague you, or to make your condition harder than formerly."

5. KING SVEIN ULFSON'S DEATH.

King Svein Ulfson died ten years after the fall of both the Haralds (A.D. 1076). After him his son, Harald Hein, was king for three years (A.D. 1077-1080); then Canute the Holy for seven years (A.D. 1081-1087); afterwards Olaf, King Svein's third son, for eight years (A.D. 1088-1095). Then Eirik the Good, Svein's fourth son, for eight winters (A.D. 1096-1103). Olaf, the king of Norway, was married to Ingerid, a daughter of Svein, the Danish king; and Olaf, the Danish King Svein's son, married Ingegerd, a daughter of King Harald, and sister of King Olaf of Norway. King Olaf Haraldson, who was called by some Olaf Kyrre, but by many Olaf the Bonde, had a son by Thora, Joan's daughter, who was called Magnus, and was one of the handsomest lads that could be seen, and was promising in every respect. He was brought up in the king's court.

6. MIRACLES OF KING OLAF THE SAINT.

King Olaf had a church of stone built in Nidaros, on the spot where King Olaf's body had first been buried, and the altar was placed directly over the spot where the king's grave had been. This church was consecrated and called Christ Church; and King Olaf's shrine was removed to it, and was placed before the altar, and many miracles took place there. The following summer, on the same day of the year as the church was consecrated, which was the day before Olafsmas, there was a great assemblage of people, and then a blind man was restored to sight. And on the mass-day itself, when the shrine and the holy relics were taken out and carried, and the shrine itself, according to custom, was taken and set down in the churchyard, a man who had long been dumb recovered his speech again, and sang with flowing tongue praise-hymns to God, and to the honour of King Olaf the Saint. The third miracle was of a woman who had come from Svithjod, and had suffered much distress on this pilgrimage from her blindness; but trusting in God's mercy, had come travelling to this solemnity. She was led blind into the church to hear mass this day; but before the service was ended she saw with both eyes, and got her sight fully and clearly,

although she had been blind fourteen years. She returned with great joy, praising God and King Olaf the Saint.

7. OF THE SHRINE OF KING OLAF THE SAINT.

There happened a circumstance in Nidaros, when King Olaf's coffin was being carried about through the streets, that it became so heavy that people could not lift it from the spot. Now when the coffin was set down, the street was broken up to see what was under it at that spot, and the body of a child was found which had been murdered and concealed there. The body was carried away, the street put in order again as it had been before, and the shrine carried on according to custom.

8. KING OLAF WAS BLESSED WITH PEACE.

In the days of King Olaf there were bountiful harvests in Norway and many good things. In no man's life had times been so good in Norway since the days of Harald Harfager. King Olaf modified for the better many a matter that his father had inaugurated and maintained with severity. He was generous, but a strict ruler, for he was a wise man, and well understood what was of advantage to the kingdom. There are many stories of his good works. How much he loved and how kind he was to the people may be seen from the following words, which he once spoke at a large banquet. He was happy and in the best of spirits, when one of his men said, "It pleases us, sire, to see you so happy." He answered: "I have reason to be glad when I see my subjects sitting happy and free in a guild consecrated to my uncle, the sainted King Olaf. In the days of my father these people were subjected to much terror and fear; the most of them concealed their gold and their precious things, but now I see glittering on his person what each one owns, and your freedom is my gladness." In his reign there was no strife, and he protected himself and his realm against enemies abroad; and his nearest neighbours stood in great awe of him, although he was a most gentle man, as is confirmed by the skald.

9. MEETING OF OLAF KYRRE AND CANUTE THE SAINT.

King Olaf Kyrre was a great friend of his brother-in-law, the Danish king, Canute the holy. They appointed a meeting and met at the Gaut river at Konungahella, where the kings used to have their meetings. There King Canute made the proposal that they should send an army westward to England on account of the revenge they had to take there; first and foremost King Olaf himself, and also the Danish king. "Do one of two things," said King Canute,—"either take sixty ships, which I will furnish thee with, and be thou the leader; or give me sixty ships, and I shall be the leader." Then said King Olaf, "This speech of thine, King Canute, is altogether according to my mind; but there is this great difference between us; your family has had more luck in conquering England with great glory, and, among others, King Canute the Great; and it is likely that this good fortune follows your race. On the other hand, when King Harald, my father, went westward to England, he got his death there; and at that time the best men in Norway followed him. But Norway was so emptied then of chosen men, that such men have not since been to find in the country; for that expedition there was the most excellent outfit, and you know what was the end of it. Now I know my own capacity, and how little I am suited to be the leader; so I would rather you should go, with my help and assistance."

So King Olaf gave Canute sixty large ships, with excellent equipment and faithful men, and set his lendemen as chiefs over them; and all must allow that this armament was admirably equipt. It is also told in the saga about Canute, that the Northmen alone did not break the levy when the army was assembled, but the Danes would not obey their king's orders. This king Canute acknowledged, and gave them leave to trade in merchandise where they pleased through his country, and at the same time sent the king of Norway costly presents for his assistance. On the other hand he was enraged against the Danes, and laid heavy fines upon them.

10. A BONDE WHO UNDERSTOOD THE LANGUAGE OF BIRDS.

One summer, when King Olaf's men had gone round the country collecting his income and land dues, it happened that the king, on their return home asked them where on their expedition they had been best entertained. They said it was in the house of a bonde in one of the king's districts. "There is an old bonde there who knows many things before they happen. We asked him about many things, which he explained to us; nay, we even believe that he understands perfectly the language of birds." The king replies, "How can ye believe such nonsense?" and insisted that it was wrong to put confidence in such things. It happened soon after that the king was sailing along the coast; and as they sailed through a Sound the king said, "What is that township up in the country?"

They replied, "That is the district, sire, where we told you we were best entertained."

Then said the king, "What house is that which stands up there, not far from the Sound?"

They replied, "That house belongs to the wise old bonde we told you of, sire."

They saw now a horse standing close to the house. Then said the king, "Go there, and take that horse, and kill him."

They replied, "We would not like to do him such harm."

The king: "I will command. Cut off the horse's head; but take care of yourselves that ye let no blood come to the ground, and bear the horse out to my ship. Go then and bring to me the old man; but tell him nothing of what has happened, as ye shall answer for it with your lives."

They did as they were ordered, and then came to the old man, and told him the king's message. When he came before the king, the king asked him, "Who owns the house thou art dwelling in?"

He replies, "Sire, you own it, and take rent for it."

The king: "Show us the way round the ness, for here thou must be a good pilot."

The old man went into his boat and rowed before the king's ship; and when he had rowed a little way a crow came flying over the ship, and croaking hideously. The peasant listens to the crow. The king said, "Do you think, bonde, that betokens anything?"

"Sire, that is certain," said he.

Then another crow flies over the ship, and screeches dreadfully. The bonde was so ill hearing this that he could not row, and the oars hung loose in his hands.

Then said the king, "Thy mind is turned much to these crows, bonde, and to what they say."

The bonde replies, "Now I suspect it is true what they say."

The third time the crow came flying screeching at its very worst, and almost settling on the ship. Now the bonde threw down his oars, regarded them no more, and stood up before the king.

Then the king said, "Thou art taking this much to heart, bonde; what is it they say?"

The peasant—"It is likely that either they or I have misunderstood—"

"Say on," replied the king.

The bonde replied in a song:—

The 'one-year old'
Mere nonsense told;
The 'two-years' chatter
Seemed senseless matter;
The three-years' croak
Of wonders spoke.
The foul bird said
My old mare's head
I row along;
And, in her song,
She said the thief
Was the land's chief.

The king said, "What is this, bonde! Wilt thou call me a thief?"

Then the king gave him good presents, and remitted all the land-rent of the place he lived on. So says Stein:—

The pillar of our royal race
Stands forth adorned with every grace.
What king before e'er took such pride
To scatter bounty far and wide?

Hung round with shields that gleam afar;
The merchant ship on one bestows,
With painted streaks in glowing rows.
"The man-at-arms a golden ring
Boasts as the present of his king;
At the king's table sits the guest,
By the king's bounty richly drest.
King Olaf, Norway's royal son,
Who from the English glory won,
Pours out with ready-giving hand
His wealth on children of the land.
"Brave clothes to servants he awards,
Helms and ring-mail coats grace his guards;
Or axe and sword Har's warriors gain,
And heavy armour for the plain.
Gold, too, for service duly paid,
Red gold all pure, and duly weighed,
King Olaf gives—he loves to pay
All service in a royal way.

11. OF KING OLAF KYRRE'S DEATH.

King Olaf lived principally in his domains on his large farms. Once when he was east in Ranrike, on his estate of Haukby, he took the disease which ended in his death. He had then been king of Norway for twenty-six years (A.D. 1068-1093); for he was made king of Norway the year after King Harald's death. King Olaf's body was taken north to Nidaros, and buried in Christ church, which he himself had built there. He was the most amiable king of his time, and Norway was much improved in riches and cultivation during his reign.

MAGNUS BAREFOOT'S SAGA.

1. BEGINNING OF THE REIGN OF KING MAGNUS AND HIS COUSIN HAKON.

Magnus, King Olaf's son, was, immediately after King Olaf's death, proclaimed at Viken king of all Norway; but the Upland people, on hearing of King Olaf's death, chose Hakon, Thorer's foster-son, a cousin of King Magnus, as king. Thereupon Hakon and Thorer went north to the Throndhjem country, and when they came to Nidaros they summoned the Eyrathing; and at that Thing Hakon desired the bondes to give him the kingly title, which was agreed to, and the Throndhjem people proclaimed him king of half of Norway, as his father, King Magnus, had been before. Hakon relieved the Throndhjem people of all harbour duties, and gave them many other privileges. He did away with Yule-gifts, and gained by this the good-will of all the Throndhjem people. Thereafter Hakon formed a court, and then proceeded to the Uplands, where he gave the Upland people the same privileges as the Throndhjem people; so that they also were perfectly well affected to him, and were his friends. The people in Throndhjem sang this ballad about him:—

Young Hakon was the Norseman's pride,
And Steig-Thorer was on his side.
Young Hakon from the Upland came,
With royal birth, and blood, and name.
Young Hakon from the king demands
His royal birthright, half the lands;
Magnus will not the kingdom break,—
The whole or nothing he will take.

2. HAKON'S DEATH.

King Magnus proceeded north to the merchant town (Nidaros), and on his arrival went straight to the king's house, and there took up his abode. He remained here the first part of the winter (A.D. 1094), and kept seven longships in the open water of the river Nid, abreast of the king's house. Now when King Hakon heard that King Magnus was come to Throndhjem, he came from the East over the Dovrefield, and thence down from Throndhjem to the merchant town, where he took up his abode in the house of Skule, opposite to Clement's church, which had formerly been the king's house. King Magnus was ill pleased with the great gifts which Hakon had given to the bondes to gain their favour, and thought it was so much given out of his own property. This irritated his mind; and he thought he had suffered injustice from his relative in this respect, that he must now put up with less income than his father and his predecessors before him had enjoyed; and he gave Thorer the blame. When King Hakon and Thorer observed this,

they were alarmed for what Magnus might do; and they thought it suspicious that Magnus kept long-ships afloat rigged out, and with tents. The following spring, after Candlemas, King Magnus left the town in the night with his ships; the tents up, and lights burning in the tents. They brought up at Hefring, remained there all night, and kindled a fire on the land. Then Hakon and the men in the town thought some treachery was on foot, and he let the trumpets call all the men together out on the Eyrar, where the whole people of the town came to him, and the people were gathering together the whole night. When it was light in the morning, King Magnus saw the people from all districts gathered together on the Eyrar; and he sailed out of the fjord, and proceeded south to where the Gulathing is held. Hakon thanked the people for their support which they had given him, and got ready to travel east to Viken. But he first held a meeting in the town, where, in a speech, he asked the people for their friendship, promising them his; and added, that he had some suspicions of his relation, King Magnus's intentions. Then King Hakon mounted his horse, and was ready to travel. All men promised him their good-will and support whenever he required them, and the people followed him out to the foot of Steinbjorg. From thence King Hakon proceeded up the Dovrefield; but as he was going over the mountains he rode all day after a ptarmigan, which flew up beside him, and in this chase a sickness overfell him, which ended in his death; and he died on the mountains. His body was carried north, and came to the merchant town just half a month after he left it. The whole townspeople went to meet the body, sorrowing, and the most of them weeping; for all people loved him with sincere affection. King Hakon's body was interred in Christ church, and Hakon and Magnus had ruled the country for two years. Hakon was a man full twenty-five years old, and was one of the chiefs the most beloved by all the people. He had made a journey to Bjarmaland, where he had given battle and gained a victory.

3. OF A FORAY IN HALLAND.

King Magnus sailed in winter (A.D. 1095) eastward to Viken; but when spring approached he went southwards to Halland, and plundered far and wide. He laid waste Viskardal and many other districts, and returned with a great booty back to his own kingdom. So says Bjorn Krephende in his song on Magnus:—

Through Halland wide around
The clang and shriek resound;
The houses burn,
The people mourn,
Through Halland wide around.
The Norse king strides in flame,
Through Viskardal he came;
The fire sweeps,
The widow weeps,
The Norse king strides in flame.

Here it is told that King Magnus made the greatest devastation through Halland.

4. OF THORER OF STEIG.

"There was a man called Svein, a son of Harald Fietter. He was a Danish man by family, a great viking and champion, and a very clever man, and of high birth in his own country. He had been some time with King Hakon Magnuson, and was very dear to him; but after King Hakon's decease Thorer of Steig, his foster-father, had no great confidence in any treaty or friendship with King Magnus, if the whole country came into his power, on account of the position in which Thorer had stood to King Magnus, and the opposition he had made to him. Thereupon Thorer and Svein took counsel with each other, which they afterwards carried into effect,—to raise, with Thorer's assistance, and his men, a troop against Magnus. But as Thorer was old and heavy, Svein took the command, and name of leader of the troop. In this design several chiefs took part, among whom the principal was Egil Aslakson of Aurland. Egil was a lenderman, and married to Ingebjorg, a daughter of Ogmund Thorbergson, a sister of Skopte of Giske. The rich and powerful man, Skjalg Erlingson, also joined their party. Thorkel Hamarskald speaks of this in his ballad of Magnus:

Thorer and Egil were not wise,
They aimed too high to win a prize:
There was no reason in their plan,
And it hurt many a udalman.
The stone, too great for them to throw,
Fell back, and hurt them with the blow,
And now the udalmen must rue
That to their friends they were so true.

Thorer and Svein collected a troop in the Uplands, and went down through Raumsdal into Sunmore, and there collected vessels, with which they afterwards sailed north to Throndhjem.

5. OF THORER'S ADVENTURES.

The lenderman Sigurd Ulstreng, a son of Lodin Viggiarskalle, collected men by sending round the war-token, as soon as he heard of Thorer and the troop which followed him, and had a rendezvous with all the men he could raise at Viggia. Svein and Thorer also met there with their people, fought with Sigurd, and gained the victory after giving him a great defeat; and Sigurd fled, and joined King Magnus. Thorer and his followers proceeded to the town (Nidaros), and remained there some time in the fjord, where many people joined them. King Magnus hearing this news immediately collected an army, and proceeded north to Throndhjem. And when he came into the fjord Thorer and his party heard of it while they lay at Herring, and they were ready to leave the fjord; and they rowed their ships to the strand at Vagnvik, and left them, and came into Theksdal in Seluhverfe, and Thorer was carried in a litter over the mountains. Then they got hold of ships and sailed north to Halogaland. As soon as King Magnus was ready for sea, he sailed from Throndhjem in pursuit of them. Thorer and his party went north all the way to Bjarkey; and Jon, with his son Vidkun, fled from thence. Thorer and his men robbed all the movable goods, and burnt the house, and a good long-ship that belonged to Vidkun. While the hull was burning the vessel keeled to one side, and Thorer called out, "Hard to starboard, Vidkun!" Some verses were made about this burning in Bjarkey:—

The sweetest farm that I have seen
Stood on Bjarkey's island green;
And now, where once this farmhouse stood,
Fire crackles through a pile of wood;
And the clear red flame, burning high,
Flashes across the dark-night sky.
Jon and Vidkun, this dark night,
Will not be wandering without light.

6. DEATH OF THORER AND EGIL.

Jon and Vidkun travelled day and night till they met King Magnus. Svein and Thorer proceeded northwards with their men, and plundered far and wide in Halogaland. But while they lay in a fjord called Harm, Thorer and his party saw King Magnus coming under sail towards them; and thinking they had not men enough to fight him, they rowed away and fled. Thorer and Egil brought up at Hesjutun; but Svein rowed out to sea, and some of their people rowed into the fjords. King Magnus pursued Thorer, and the vessels struck together while they were landing. Thorer stood in the forecastle of his ship, and Sigurd Ulstreng called out to him, and asked, "Art thou well, Thorer?" Thorer replied, "I am well in hands, but ill on my feet."

Then all Thorer's men fled up the country, and Thorer was taken prisoner. Egil was also taken prisoner, for he would not leave his wife. King Magnus then ordered both of them to be taken out to Vambarholm; and when they were leading Thorer from the ship he tottered on his legs. Then Vidkun called out, "More to the larboard, Thorer!" When he was being led to the gallows he sang:—

We were four comrades gay,—
Let one by the helm stay.

When he came to the gallows he said, "Bad counsel comes to a bad end." Then Thorer was hanged; but when he was hoisted up the gallows tree he was so heavy that his neck gave way, and the body fell down to the ground; for Thorer was a man exceedingly stout, both high of stature and thick. Egil was also led to the gallows, and when the king's thralls were about hanging him he said, "Ye should not hang me, for in truth each of you deserves much more to be hanged." People sang these verses about it:—

I hear, my girl, that Egil said,
When to the gallows he was led,
That the king's thralls far more than he
Deserved to hang on gallows-tree.
It might be so; but, death in view,
A man should to himself be true,—
End a stout life by death as stout,
Showing no fear; or care, or doubt.

King Magnus sat near while they were being hanged, and was in such a rage that none of his men was so bold as to ask mercy for them. The king said, when Egil was spinning at the gallows, "Thy great friends help thee but poorly in time of need." From this people supposed that the king only wanted to have been entreated to have spared Egil's life. Bjorn Krephende speaks of these things:—

King Magnus in the robbers' gore
Dyed red his sword; and round the shore
The wolves howled out their wild delight,
At corpses swinging in their sight.
Have ye not heard how the king's sword
Punished the traitors to their lord?
How the king's thralls hung on the gallows
Old Thoror and his traitor-fellows?

7. OF THE PUNISHMENT OF THE THRONDHJEM PEOPLE.

After this King Magnus sailed south to Throndhjem, and brought up in the fjord, and punished severely all who had been guilty of treason towards him; killing some, and burning the houses of others. So says Bjorn Krephende:—

He who despises fence of shields
Drove terror through the Throndhjem fields,
When all the land through which he came
Was swimming in a flood of flame.
The raven-feeder, will I know,
Cut off two chieftans at a blow;
The wolf could scarcely ravenous be,
The ernes flew round the gallows-tree.

Svein Harald Fletter's son, fled out to sea first, and sailed then to Denmark, and remained there; and at last came into great favour with King Eystein, the son of King Magnus, who took so great a liking to Svein that he made him his dish-bearer, and held him in great respect. King Magnus had now alone the whole kingdom, and he kept good peace in the land, and rooted out all vikings and lawless men. He was a man quick, warlike, and able, and more like in all things to his grandfather, King Harald, in disposition and talents than to his father.

8. OF THE BONDE SVEINKE, AND SIGURD ULSTRENG.

There was a man called Sveinke Steinarson, who was very wealthy, and dwelt in Viken at the Gaut river. He had brought up Hakon Magnuson before Thoror of Steig took him. Sveinke had not yet submitted to King Magnus. King Magnus ordered Sigurd Ulstreng to be called, and told him he would send him to Sveinke with the command that he should quit the king's land and domain. "He has not yet submitted to us, or shown us due honour." He added, that there were some lendersmen east in Viken, namely Svein Bryggjufot, Dag Eilifson, and Kolbjorn Klakke, who could bring this matter into right bearing. Then Sigurd said, "I did not know there was the man in Norway against whom three lendersmen besides myself were needful." The king replied, "Thou needst not take this help, unless it be necessary." Now Sigurd made himself ready for the journey with a ship, sailed east to Viken, and there summoned the lendersmen to him. Then a Thing was appointed to Viken, to which the people were called who dwelt on the Gaut river, besides others; so that it was a numerous assembly. When the Thing was formed they had to wait for Sveinke. They soon after saw a troop of men coming along, so well furnished with weapons that they looked like pieces of shining ice; and now came Sveinke and his people to the Thing, and set themselves down in a circle. All were clad in iron, with glowing arms, and 500 in number. Then Sigurd stood up, and spoke. "My master, King Magnus, sends God's salutation and his own to all friends, lendersmen and others, his subjects in the kingdom; also to the powerful bondes, and the people in general, with kind words and

offers of friendship; and to all who will obey him he offers his friendship and good will. Now the king will, with all cheerfulness and peace, show himself a gracious master to all who will submit to him, and to all in his dominions. He will be the leader and defender of all the men of Norway; and it will be good for you to accept his gracious speech, and this offer."

Then stood up a man in the troop of the Elfgrims, who was of great stature and grim countenance, clad in a leather cloak, with a halberd on his shoulder, and a great steel hat upon his head. He looked sternly, and said, "Here is no need of wheels, says the fox, when he draws the trap over the ice." He said nothing more, but sat down again.

Soon after Sigurd Ulstreng stood up again, and spoke thus: "But little concern or help have we for the king's affairs from you, Elfgrims, and but little friendship; yet by such means every man shows how much he respects himself. But now I shall produce more clearly the king's errand." Thereupon he demanded land-dues and levy-dues, together with all other rights of the king, from the great bondes. He bade each of them to consider with himself how they had conducted themselves in these matters; and that they should now promote their own honour, and do the king justice, if they had come short hitherto in doing so. And then he sat down.

Then the same man got up in the troop of Elfgrims who had spoken before, lifted his hat a little up, and said, "The lads run well, say the Laplanders, who have skates for nothing." Then he sat himself down again.

Soon after Sigurd arose, after speaking with the lendersmen, and said that so weighty a message as the king's ought not to be treated lightly as a jest. He was now somewhat angry; and added, that they ought not to receive the king's message and errand so scornfully, for it was not decent. He was dressed in a red or scarlet coat, and had a blue coat over it. He cast off his upper coat and said, "Now it is come so far that every one must look to himself, and not loiter and jest with others; for by so doing every man will show what he is. We do not require now to be taught by others; for now we can see ourselves how much we are regarded. But this may be borne with; but not that ye treat so scornfully the king's message. Thereby every one shows how highly he considers himself. There is one man called Sveinke Steinarson, who lives east at the Gaut river; and from him the king will have his just land-dues, together with his own land, or will banish him from the country. It is of no use here to seek excuses, or to answer with sharp words; for people are to be found who are his equals in power, although he now receives our speech so unworthily; and it is better now than afterwards to return to the right way, and do himself honour, rather than await disgrace for his obstinacy." He then sat down.

Sveinke then got up, threw back his steel-hat, and gave Sigurd many scornful words, and said, "Tut! tut! 'tis a shame for the dogs, says the proverb, when the fox is allowed to cast their excrements in the peasant's well. Here will be a miracle! Thou useless fellow! with a coat without arms, and a kirtle with skirts, wilt thou drive me out of the country? Thy relation, Sigurd Woolsack, was sent before on this errand, and one called Gille the Backthief, and one who had still a worse name. They were a night in every house, and stole wherever they came. Wilt thou drive me out of the country? Formerly thou wast not so mighty, and thy pride was less when King Hakon, my foster-son, was in life. Then thou wert as frightened for him when he met thee on the road as a mouse in a mouse-trap, and hid thyself under a heap of clothes, like a dog on board a ship. Thou wast thrust into a leather-bag like corn in a sack, and driven from house and farm like a year-old colt from the mares; and dost thou dare to drive me from the land? Thou shouldst rather think thyself lucky to escape from hence with life. Let us stand up and attack him!"

Then all his men stood up, and made a great clash with their weapons. Then Svein Bryggjufot and the other lendersmen saw there was no other chance for Sigurd but to get him on horseback, which was done, and he rode off into the forest. The end was that Sveinke returned home to his farm, and Sigurd Ulstreng came, with great difficulty, by land north to Throndhjem to King Magnus, and told the result of his errand. "Did I not say," said the king, "that the help of my lendersmen would be needed?" Sigurd was ill

pleased with his journey; insisted that he would be revenged, cost what it will; and urged the king much. The king ordered five ships to be fitted out; and as soon as they were ready for sea he sailed south along the land, and then east to Viken, where he was entertained in excellent guest-quarters by his lendersmen. The king told them he would seek out Sveinke. "For I will not conceal my suspicion that he thinks to make himself king of Norway." They said that Sveinke was both a powerful and an ungovernable man. Now the king went from Viken until he came to Sveinke's farm. Then the lendersmen desired that they might be put on shore to see how matters stood; and when they came to the land they saw that Sveinke had already come down from the farm, and was on the road with a number of well-armed men. The lendersmen held up a white shield in the air, as a peace-token; and when Sveinke saw it he halted his men, and they approached each other. Then said Kolbjorn Klakke, "King Magnus sends thee God's salutation and his own, and bids thee consider what becomes thee, and do him obedience, and not prepare thyself to give him battle." Kolbjorn offered to mediate peace between them, if he could, and told him to halt his troops.

Sveinke said he would wait for them where he was. "We came out to meet you," he said, "that ye might not tread down our corn-fields."

The lendersmen returned to the king, and told him all was now at his pleasure.

The king said, "My doom is soon delivered. He shall fly the country, and never come back to Norway as long as the kingdom is mine; and he shall leave all his goods behind."

"But will it not be more for thy honour," said Kolbjorn, "and give thee a higher reputation among other kings, if, in banishing him from the country, thou shouldst allow him to keep his property, and show himself among other people? And we shall take care that he never comes back while we live. Consider of this, sire, by yourself, and have respect for our assurance."

The king replied, "Let him then go forth immediately."

They went back, therefore, to Sveinke, and told him the king's words; and also that the king had ordered him out of the country, and he should show his obedience, since he had forgotten himself towards the king. "It is for the honour of both that thou shouldst show obedience to the king."

Then Sveinke said, "There must be some great change if the king speaks agreeably to me; but why should I fly the country and my properties? Listen now to what I say. It appears to me better to die upon my property than to fly from my udal estates. Tell the king that I will not stir from them even an arrow-flight."

Kolbjorn replied, "This is scarcely prudent, or right; for it is better for one's own honour to give way to the best chief, than to make opposition to one's own loss. A gallant man succeeds wheresoever he goes; and thou wilt be the more respected wheresoever thou art, with men of power, just because thou hast made head so boldly against so powerful a chief. Hear our promises, and pay some attention to our errand. We offer thee to manage thy estates, and take them faithfully under our protection; and also never, against thy will, to pay scat for thy land until thou comest back. We will pledge our lives and properties upon this. Do not throw away good counsel from thee, and avoid thus the ill fortune of other good men."

Then Sveinke was silent for a short time, and said at last, "Your endeavours are wise; but I have my suspicions that ye are changing a little the king's message. In consideration, however, of the great good-will that ye show me, I will hold your advice in such respect that I will go out of the country for the whole winter, if, according to your promises, I can then retain my estates in peace. Tell the king, also, these my words, that I do this on your account, not on his."

Thereupon they returned to the king, and said, that Sveinke left all in the king's hands. "But entreats you to have respect to his honour. He will be away for three years, and then come back, if it be the king's pleasure. Do this; let all things be done according to what is suitable for the royal dignity and according to our entreaty, now that the matter is entirely in thy power, and we shall do all we can to prevent his returning against thy will."

The king replied, "Ye treat this matter like men, and, for your sakes, shall all things be as ye desire. Tell him so."

They thanked the king, and then went to Sveinke, and told him the king's gracious intentions. "We will be glad," said they, "if ye can be reconciled. The king requires, indeed that thy absence shall be for three years; but, if we know the truth rightly, we expect that before that time he will find he cannot do without thee in this part of the country. It will be to thy own future honour, therefore, to agree to this."

Sveinke replies, "What condition is better than this? Tell the king that I shall not vex him longer with my presence here, and accept of my goods and estates on this condition."

Thereupon he went home with his men, and set off directly; for he had prepared everything beforehand. Kolbjorn remains behind, and makes ready a feast for King Magnus, which also was thought of and prepared. Sveinke, on the other hand, rides up to Gautland with all the men he thought proper to take with him. The king let himself be entertained in guest-quarters at his house, returned to Viken, and Sveinke's estates were nominally the king's, but Kolbjorn had them under his charge. The king received guest-quarters in Viken, proceeded from thence northwards, and there was peace for a while; but now that the Elfgrims were without a chief, marauding gangs infested them, and the king saw this eastern part of the kingdom would be laid waste. It appeared to him, therefore, most suitable and advisable to make Sveinke himself oppose the stream, and twice he sent messages to him. But he did not stir until King Magnus himself was south in Denmark, when Sveinke and the king met, and made a full reconciliation; on which Sveinke returned home to his house and estates, and was afterwards King Magnus's best and truest friend, who strengthened his kingdom on the eastern border; and their friendship continued as long as they lived.

9. KING MAGNUS MAKES WAR ON THE SOUTHERN HEBUDES.

King Magnus undertook an expedition out of the country, with many fine men and a good assortment of shipping. With this armament he sailed out into the West sea, and first came to the Orkney Islands. There he took the two earls, Paul and Erlend, prisoners, and sent them east to Norway, and placed his son Sigurd as chief over the islands, leaving some counsellors to assist him. From thence King Magnus, with his followers, proceeded to the Southern Hebrides, and when he came there began to burn and lay waste the inhabited places, killing the people and plundering wherever he came with his men; and the country people fled in all directions, some into Scotland-fjord, others south to Cantire, or out to Ireland; some obtained life and safety by entering into his service. So says Bjorn Krephende:—

In Lewis Isle with fearful blaze
The house-destroying fire plays;
To hills and rocks the people fly,
Fearing all shelter but the sky.
In Uist the king deep crimson made
The lightning of his glancing blade;
The peasant lost his land and life
Who dared to bide the Norseman's strife.
The hunger battle-birds were filled
In Skye with blood of foemen killed,
And wolves on Tyree's lonely shore
Dyed red their hairy jaws in gore.
The men of Mull were tired of flight;
The Scottish foemen would not fight,
And many an island-girl's wail
Was heard as through the isles we strife sail.

10. OF LAGMAN, KING GUDROD'S SON.

King Magnus came with his forces to the Holy Island (Iona), and gave peace and safety to all men there. It is told that the king opened the door of the little Columb's Kirk there, but did not go in, but instantly locked the door again, and said that no man should be so bold as to go into that church hereafter; which has been the case ever since. From thence King Magnus sailed to Islay, where he plundered and burnt; and when he had taken that country he proceeded south around Cantire, marauding on both sides in Scotland and Ireland, and advanced with his foray to Man, where he plundered. So says Bjorn Krephende:—

On Sandey's plain our shield they spy:
 From Isla smoke rose heaven-high,
 Whirling up from the flashing blaze
 The king's men o'er the island raise.
 South of Cantire the people fled,
 Scared by our swords in blood dyed red,
 And our brave champion onward goes
 To meet in Man the Norseman's foes.

Lawman (Lawman) was the name of the son of Gudrod, king of the Hebudes. Lawman was sent to defend the most northerly islands; but when King Magnus and his army came to the Hebudes, Lawman fled here and there about the isles, and at last King Magnus's men took him and his ship's crew as he was flying over to Ireland. The king put him in irons to secure him. So says Bjorn Krephende:—

To Gudrod's son no rock or cave,
 Shore-side or hill, a refuge gave;
 Hunted around from isle to isle,
 This Lawman found no safe asyle.
 From isle to isle, o'er firth and sound,
 Close on his track his foe he found.
 At Ness the Agder chief at length
 Seized him, and iron-chained his strength.

11. OF THE FALL OF EARL HUGO THE BRAVE.

Afterwards King Magnus sailed to Wales; and when he came to the sound of Anglesey there came against him an army from Wales, which was led by two earls—Hugo the brave, and Hugo the Stout. They began immediately to give battle, and there was a severe conflict. King Magnus shot with the bow; but Hugo the Brave was all over in armour, so that nothing was bare about him excepting one eye. King Magnus let fly an arrow at him, as also did a Halogaland man who was beside the king. They both shot at once. The one shaft hit the nose-screen of the helmet, which was bent by it to one side, and the other arrow hit the earl's eye, and went through his head; and that was found to be the king's. Earl Hugo fell, and the Britons fled with the loss of many people. So says Bjorn Krephende:—

The swinger of the sword
 Stood by Anglesey's ford;
 His quick shaft flew,
 And Hugo slew.
 His sword gleamed a while
 O'er Anglesey Isle,
 And his Norsemen's band
 Scoured the Anglesey land.

There was also sung the following verse about it:—

On the panzers arrows rattle,
 Where our Norse king stands in battle;
 From the helmets blood-streams flow,
 Where our Norse king draws his bow:
 His bowstring twangs,—its biting hail
 Rattles against the ring-linked mail.
 Up in the land in deadly strife
 Our Norse king took Earl Hugo's life.

King Magnus gained the victory in this battle, and then took Anglesey Isle, which was the farthest south the Norway kings of former days had ever extended their rule. Anglesey is a third part of Wales. After this battle King Magnus turned back with his fleet, and came first to Scotland. Then men went between the Scottish king, Melkolm and King Magnus, and a peace was made between them; so that all the islands lying west of Scotland, between which and the mainland he could pass in a vessel with her rudder shipped, should be held to belong to the king of Norway. Now when King Magnus came north to Cantire, he had a skiff drawn over the strand at Cantire, and shipped the rudder of it. The king himself sat in the stern-sheets, and held the tiller; and thus he appropriated to himself the land that lay on the farboard side. Cantire is a great district, better than the best of the southern isles of the Hebudes, excepting Man; and there is a small neck of land between it and the mainland of Scotland, over which long-ships are often drawn.

12. DEATH OF THE EARLS OF ORKNEY.

King Magnus was all the winter in the southern isles, and his men went over all the fjords of Scotland, rowing within all the inhabited and uninhabited isles, and took possession for the king of Norway of all the islands west of Scotland. King Magnus contracted in marriage his son Sigurd to Biadmynia, King Myrkjartan's daughter. Myrkjartan was a son of the Irish king Thialfe, and ruled over Connaught. The summer after, King Magnus, with his fleet, returned east to Norway. Earl Erland died of sickness at Nidaros, and is buried there; and Earl Paul died in Bergen.

Skopte Ogmundson, a grandson of Thorberg, was a gallant lenderman, who dwelt at Giske in Sunmore, and was married to Gudrun, a daughter of Thord Folason. Their children were Ogmund, Fin, Thord, and Thora, who was married to Asolf Skulason. Skopte's and Gudrun's sons were the most promising and popular men in their youth.

13. QUARRELS OF KING MAGNUS AND KING INGE.

Steinkel, the Swedish king, died about the same time (A.D. 1066) as the two Haralds fell, and the king who came after him in Svithjod was called Hakon. Afterwards Inge, a son of Steinkel, was king, and was a good and powerful king, strong and stout beyond most men; and he was king of Svithjod when King Magnus was king of Norway. King Magnus insisted that the boundaries of the countries in old times had been so, that the Gaut river divided the kingdoms of the Swedish and Norwegian kings, but afterwards the Vener lake up to Vermaland. Thus King Magnus insisted that he was owner of all the places lying west of the Vener lake up to Vermaland, which are the districts of Sundal, Nordal, Vear, and Vardyniar, with all the woods belonging thereto. But these had for a long time been under the Swedish dominion, and with respect to scat were joined to West Gautland; and, besides, the forest-settlers preferred being under the Swedish king. King Magnus rode from Viken up to Gautland with a great and fine army, and when he came to the forest-settlements he plundered and burnt all round; on which the people submitted, and took the oath of fidelity to him. When he came to the Vener lake, autumn was advanced and he went out to the island Kvaldinsøy, and made a stronghold of turf and wood, and dug a ditch around it. When the work was finished, provisions and other necessities that might be required were brought to it. The king left in it 300 men, who were the chosen of his forces, and Fin Skoptason and Sigurd Ulstreng as their commanders. The king himself returned to Viken.

14. OF THE NORTHMEN.

When the Swedish king heard this he drew together people, and the report came that he would ride against these Northmen; but there was delay about his riding, and the Northmen made these lines:—

The fat-hipped king, with heavy sides,
 Finds he must mount before he rides.

But when the ice set in upon the Vener lake King Inge rode down, and had near 300 men with him. He sent a message to the Northmen who sat in the burgh that they might retire with all the booty they had taken, and go to Norway. When the messengers brought this message, Sigurd Ulstreng replied to it; saying that King Inge must take the trouble to come, if he wished to drive them away like cattle out of a grass field, and said he must come nearer if he wished them to remove. The messengers returned with this answer to the king, who then rode out with all his army to the island, and again sent a message to the Northmen that they might go away, taking with them their weapons, clothes, and horses; but must leave behind all their booty. This they refused. The king made an assault upon them, and they shot at each other. Then the king ordered timber and stones to be collected, and he filled up the ditch; and then he fastened anchors to long spars which were brought up to the timber-walls, and, by the strength of many hands, the walls were broken down. Thereafter a large pile of wood was set on fire, and the lighted brands were flung in among them. Then the Northmen asked for quarter. The

king ordered them to go out without weapons or cloaks. As they went out each of them received a stroke with a whip, and then they set off for Norway, and all the forest-men submitted again to King Inge. Sigurd and his people went to King Magnus, and told him their misfortune.

15. KING MAGNUS AND GIPARDE.

When King Magnus was east in Viken, there came to him a foreigner called Giparde. He gave himself out for a good knight, and offered his services to King Magnus; for he understood that in the king's dominions there was something to be done. The king received him well. At that time the king was preparing to go to Gautland, on which country the king had pretensions; and besides he would repay the Gautland people the disgrace they had occasioned him in spring, when he was obliged to fly from them. He had then a great force in arms, and the West Gautlanders in the northern districts submitted to him. He set up his camp on the borders, intending to make a foray from thence. When King Inge heard of this he collected troops, and hastened to oppose King Magnus; and when King Magnus heard of this expedition, many of the chiefs of the people urged him to turn back; but this the king would not listen to, but in the night time went unsuspectingly against the Swedish king. They met at Foxerne; and when he was drawing up his men in battle order he asked, "Where is Giparde?" but he was not to be found. Then the king made these verses:—

Cannot the foreign knight abide
Our rough array?—where does he hide?

Then a skald who followed the king replied:—

The king asks where the foreign knight
In our array rides to the fight:
Giparde the knight rode quite away
When our men joined in bloody fray.
When swords were wet the knight was slow
With his bay horse in front to go;
The foreign knight could not abide
Our rough array, and went to hide.

There was a great slaughter, and after the battle the field was covered with the Swedes slain, and King Inge escaped by flight. King Magnus gained a great victory. Then came Giparde riding down from the country, and people did not speak well of him for not being in the fight. He went away, and proceeded westward to England; and the voyage was stormy, and Giparde lay in bed. There was an Iceland man called Eldjarn, who went to bale out the water in the ship's hold, and when he saw where Giparde was lying he made this verse:—

Does it beseech a courtman bold
Here to be dozing in the hold?
The bearded knight should danger face:
The leak gains on our ship apace.
Here, ply this bucket! bale who can;
We need the work of every man.
Our sea-horse stands full to the breast,—
Sluggards and cowards must not rest.

When they came west to England, Giparde said the Northmen had slandered him. A meeting was appointed, and a count came to it, and the case was brought before him for trial. He said he was not much acquainted with law cases, as he was but young, and had only been a short time in office; and also, of all things, he said what he least understood to judge about was poetry. "But let us hear what it was." Then Eldjarn sang:—

I heard that in the bloody fight
Giparde drove all our foes to flight:
Brave Giparde would the foe abide,
While all our men ran off to hide.
At Foxerne the fight was won
By Giparde's valour all alone;
Where Giparde fought, alone was he;
Not one survived to fight or flee.

Then said the count, "Although I know but little about skald-craft, I can hear that this is no slander, but rather the highest praise and honour." Giparde could say nothing against it, yet he felt it was a mockery.

16. BATTLE OF FOXERNE.

The spring after, as soon as the ice broke up, King Magnus, with a great army, sailed eastwards to the Gaut river, and went up the eastern arm of it, laying waste all that belonged to the Swedish dominions. When they came to Foxerne they landed from their vessels; but as they came over a river on their way an army of Gautland people came against them, and there was immediately a great battle, in which the Northmen were overwhelmed by numbers, driven to flight, and many of them killed near to a waterfall. King Magnus fled, and the Gautlanders pursued, and killed those they could get near. King Magnus was easily known. He was a very stout man, and had a red short cloak over him, and bright yellow hair like silk that fell over his shoulders. Ogmund Skoptason, who was a tall and handsome man, rode on one side of the king. He said, "Sire, give me that cloak."

The king said, "What would you do with it?"

"I would like to have it," said Ogmund; "and you have given me greater gifts, sire."

The road was such that there were great and wide plains, so that the Gautlanders and Northmen were always in sight of each other, unless where clumps of wood and bushes concealed them from each other now and then. The king gave Ogmund the cloak and he put it on. When they came out again upon the plain ground, Ogmund and his people rode off right across the road. The Gautlanders, supposing this must be the king, rode all after him, and the king proceeded to the ships. Ogmund escaped with great difficulty; however, he reached the ships at last in safety. King Magnus then sailed down the river, and proceeded north to Viken.

17. MEETING OF THE KINGS AT THE GAUT RIVER.

The following summer a meeting of the kings was agreed upon at Konghelle on the Gaut river; and King Magnus, the Swedish king, Inge, and the Danish king, Eirik Sveinson, all met there, after giving each other safe conduct to the meeting. Now when the Thing had sat down the kings went forward upon the plain, apart from the rest of the people, and they talked with each other a little while. Then they returned to their people, and a treaty was brought about, by which each should possess the dominions his forefathers had held before him; but each should make good to his own men the waste and manslaughter suffered by them, and then they should agree between themselves about settling this with each other. King Magnus should marry King Inge's daughter Margaret, who afterwards was called Peace-offering. This was proclaimed to the people; and thus, within a little hour, the greatest enemies were made the best of friends.

It was observed by the people that none had ever seen men with more of the air of chiefs than these had. King Inge was the largest and stoutest, and, from his age, of the most dignified appearance. King Magnus appeared the most gallant and brisk, and King Eirik the most handsome. But they were all handsome men; stout, gallant, and ready in speech. After this was settled they parted.

18. KING MAGNUS'S MARRIAGE.

King Magnus got Margaret, King Inge's daughter, as above related; and she was sent from Svithjod to Norway with an honourable retinue. King Magnus had some children before, whose names shall here be given. The one of his sons who was of a mean mother was called Eystein; the other, who was a year younger, was called Sigurd, and his mother's name was Thora. Olaf was the name of a third son, who was much younger than the two first mentioned, and whose mother was Sigrid, a daughter of Saxe of Vik, who was a respectable man in the Throndhjem country; she was the king's concubine. People say that when King Magnus came home from his viking cruise to the Western countries, he and many of his people brought with them a great deal of the habits and fashion of clothing of those western parts. They went about on the streets with bare legs, and had short kirtles and over-cloaks; and therefore his men called him Magnus Barefoot or Bareleg. Some called him Magnus the Tall, others Magnus the Strife-lover. He was distinguished among other men by his tall stature. The mark of his height is put down in Mary church, in the merchant town

of Nidaros, which King Harald built. In the northern door there were cut into the wall three crosses, one for Harald's stature, one for Olaf's, and one for Magnus's; and which crosses each of them could with the greatest ease kiss. The upper was Harald's cross; the lowest was Magnus's; and Olaf's was in the middle, about equally distant from both.

It is said that Magnus composed the following verses about the emperor's daughter:—

The ring of arms where blue swords gleam,
The battle-shout, the eagle's scream,
The joy of war, no more can please:
Matilda is far o'er the seas.
My sword may break, my shield be cleft,
Of land or life I may be left;
Yet I could sleep, but for one care,—
One, o'er the seas, with light-brown hair.

He also composed the following:—

The time that breeds delay feels long,
The skald feels weary of his song;
What sweetens, brightens, eases life?
'Tis a sweet-smiling lovely wife.
My time feels long in Thing affairs,
In Things my loved one ne'er appears.
The folk full-dressed, while I am sad,
Talk and oppose—can I be glad?

When King Magnus heard the friendly words the emperor's daughter had spoken about him—that she had said such a man as King Magnus was appeared to her an excellent man, he composed the following:—

The lover hears,—across the sea,
A favouring word was breathed to me.
The lovely one with light-brown hair
May trust her thoughts to senseless air;
Her thoughts will find like thoughts in me;
And though my love I cannot see,
Affection's thoughts fly in the wind,
And meet each other, true and kind.

19. OF THE QUARREL OF KING MAGNUS AND SKOPTÉ.

Skopte Ogmundson came into variance with King Magnus, and they quarrelled about the inheritance of a deceased person which Skopte retained; but the king demanded it with so much earnestness, that it had a dangerous appearance. Many meetings were held about the affair, and Skopte took the resolution that he and his son should never put themselves into the king's power at the same time; and besides there was no necessity to do so. When Skopte was with the king he represented to him that there was relationship between the king and him; and also that he, Skopte, had always been the king's friend, and his father's likewise, and that their friendship had never been shaken. He added, "People might know that I have sense enough not to hold a strife, sire, with you, if I was wrong in what I asked; but it is inherited from my ancestors to defend my rights against any man, without distinction of persons." The king was just the same on this point, and his resolution was by no means softened by such a speech. Then Skopte went home.

20. FIN SKOPTASON'S PROCEEDINGS.

Then Fin Skoptason went to the king, spoke with him, and entreated him to render justice to the father and son in this business. The king answers angrily and sharply. Then said Fin, "I expected something else, sire, from you, than that you would use the law's vexations against me when I took my seat in Kvaldinsy Island, which few of your other friends would do; as they said, what was true, that those who were left there were deserted and doomed to death, if King Inge had not shown greater generosity to us than you did; although many consider that we brought shame and disgrace only from thence." The king was not to be moved by this speech, and Fin returned home.

21. OGMUND SKOPTASON'S PROCEEDINGS.

Then came Ogmund Skoptason to the king; and when he came before him he produced his errand, and begged the king to do what

was right and proper towards him and his father. The king insisted that the right was on his side, and said they were "particularly impudent."

Then said Ogmund, "It is a very easy thing for thee, having the power, to do me and my father injustice; and I must say the old proverb is true, that one whose life you save gives none, or a very bad return. This I shall add, that never again shall I come into thy service; nor my father, if I can help it." Then Ogmund went home, and they never saw each other again.

22. SKOPTÉ OGMUNDSON'S VOYAGE ABROAD.

The spring after, Skopte Ogmundson made ready to travel out of the country. They had five long-ships all well equipped. His sons, Ogmund, Fin, and Thord, accompanied him on this journey. It was very late before they were ready, and in autumn they went over to Flanders, and wintered there. Early in spring they sailed westward to Valland, and stayed there all summer. Then they sailed further, and through Norvasund; and came in autumn to Rome, where Skopte died. All, both father and sons, died on this journey. Thord, who died in Sicily, lived the longest. It is a common saying among the people that Skopte was the first Northman who sailed through Norvasund; and this voyage was much celebrated.

23. MIRACLE OF KING OLAF THE SAINT AT A FIRE.

It happened once in the merchant town (Nidaros) where King Olaf reposes, that there broke out a fire in the town which spread around. Then Olaf's shrine was taken out of the church, and set up opposite the fire. Thereupon came a crazy foolish man, struck the shrine, threatened the holy saint, and said all must be consumed by the flames, both churches and other houses, if he did not save them by his prayers. Now the burning of the church did cease, by the help of Almighty God; but the insane man got sore eyes on the following night, and he lay there until King Olaf entreated God Almighty to be merciful to him; after which he recovered in the same church.

24. MIRACLE OF KING OLAF ON A LAME WOMAN.

It happened once in the merchant town that a woman was brought to the place where the holy King Olaf reposes. She was so miserably shaped, that she was altogether crumpled up; so that both her feet lay in a circle against her loins. But as she was diligent in her prayers, often weeping and making vows to King Olaf, he cured her great infirmities; so that feet, legs, and other limbs straightened, and every limb and part came to the right use for which they were made. Before she could not creep there, and now she went away active and brisk to her family and home.

25. WAR IN IRELAND.

When King Magnus had been nine years king of Norway (A.D. 1094-1102), he equipped himself to go out of the country with a great force. He sailed out into the West sea with the finest men who could be got in Norway. All the powerful men of the country followed him; such as Sigurd Hranason, Vidkun Jonson, Dag Eilifson, Serk of Sogn, Eyvind Olboge, the king's marshal Ulf Hranason, brother of Sigurd, and many other great men. With all this armament the king sailed west to the Orkney Islands, from whence he took with him Earl Erlend's sons, Magnus and Erling, and then sailed to the southern Hebrides. But as he lay under the Scotch land, Magnus Erlendson ran away in the night from the king's ship, swam to the shore, escaped into the woods, and came at last to the Scotch king's court. King Magnus sailed to Ireland with his fleet, and plundered there. King Myrkjartan came to his assistance, and they conquered a great part of the country, both Dublin and Dyflinnarskire (Dublin shire). King Magnus was in winter (A.D. 1102) up in Connaught with King Myrkjartan, but set men to defend the country he had taken. Towards spring both kings went westward with their army all the way to Ulster, where they had many battles, subdued the country, and had conquered the

greatest part of Ulster when Myrkjartan returned home to Con-naught.

26. KING MAGNUS'S FORAY ON THE LAND.

King Magnus rigged his ships, and intended returning to Norway, but set his men to defend the country of Dublin. He lay at Ulster ready for sea with his whole fleet. As they thought they needed cattle for ship-provision, King Magnus sent a message to King Myrkjartan, telling him to send some cattle for slaughter; and appointed the day before Bartholomew's day as the day they should arrive, if the messengers reached him in safety; but the cattle had not made their appearance the evening before Bartholomew's mass. On the mass-day itself, when the sun rose in the sky, King Magnus went on shore himself with the greater part of his men, to look after his people, and to carry off cattle from the coast. The weather was calm, the sun shone, and the road lay through mires and mosses, and there were paths cut through; but there was brushwood on each side of the road. When they came somewhat farther, they reached a height from which they had a wide view. They saw from it a great dust rising up the country, as of horsemen, and they said to each other, "That must be the Irish army;" but others said, "It was their own men returning with the cattle." They halted there; and Eyvind Olboge said, "How, sire, do you intend to direct the march? The men think we are advancing imprudently. You know the Irish are treacherous; think, therefore, of a good counsel for your men." Then the king said, "Let us draw up our men, and be ready, if there be treachery." This was done, and the king and Eyvind went before the line. King Magnus had a helmet on his head; a red shield, in which was inlaid a gilded lion; and was girt with the sword of Legbit, of which the hilt was of tooth (ivory), and handgrip wound about with gold thread; and the sword was extremely sharp. In his hand he had a short spear, and a red silk short cloak, over his coat, on which, both before and behind, was embroidered a lion in yellow silk; and all men acknowledged that they never had seen a brisker, statelier man. Eyvind had also a red silk cloak like the king's; and he also was a stout, handsome, warlike man.

27. FALL OF KING MAGNUS.

When the dust-cloud approached nearer they knew their own men, who were driving the cattle. The Irish king had been faithful to the promises he had given the king, and had sent them. Thereupon they all turned towards the ships, and it was mid-day. When they came to the mires they went but slowly over the boggy places; and then the Irish started up on every side against them from every bushy point of land, and the battle began instantly. The Northmen were going divided in various heaps, so that many of them fell.

Then said Eyvind to the king, "Unfortunate is this march to our people, and we must instantly hit upon some good plan."

The king answered, "Call all the men together with the war-horns under the banner, and the men who are here shall make a rampart with their shields, and thus we will retreat backwards out of the mires; and we will clear ourselves fast enough when we get upon firm ground."

The Irish shot boldly; and although they fell in crowds, there came always two in the place of one. Now when the king had come to the nearest ditch there was a very difficult crossing, and few places were passable; so that many Northmen fell there. Then the king called to his lenderman Thorgrim Skinhufa, who was an Upland man, and ordered him to go over the ditch with his division. "We shall defend you," said he, "in the meantime, so that no harm shall come to you. Go out then to those holms, and shoot at them from thence; for ye are good bowmen."

When Thorgrim and his men came over the ditch they cast their shields behind their backs, and set off to the ships.

When the king saw this, he said, "Thou art deserting thy king in an unmanly way. I was foolish in making thee a lenderman, and driving Sigurd Hund out of the country; for never would he have behaved so."

King Magnus received a wound, being pierced by a spear through both thighs above the knees. The king laid hold of the shaft between his legs, broke the spear in two, and said, "Thus we break spear-shafts, my lads; let us go briskly on. Nothing hurts me." A little after King Magnus was struck in the neck with an Irish axe, and this was his death-wound. Then those who were behind fled. Vidkun Jonson instantly killed the man who had given the king his death-wound, and fled, after having received three wounds; but brought the king's banner and the sword Legbit to the ships. Vidkun was the last man who fled; the other next to him was Sigurd Hranason, and the third before him, Dag Eilifson. There fell with King Magnus, Eyvind Olboge, Ulf Hranason, and many other great people. Many of the Northmen fell, but many more of the Irish. The Northmen who escaped sailed away immediately in autumn. Erling, Earl Erlend's son, fell with King Magnus in Ireland; but the men who fled from Ireland came to the Orkney Islands. Now when King Sigurd heard that his father had fallen, he set off immediately, leaving the Irish king's daughter behind, and proceeded in autumn with the whole fleet directly to Norway.

28. OF KING MAGNUS AND VIDKUN JONSON.

King Magnus was ten years king of Norway (A.D. 1094-1105), and in his days there was good peace kept within the country; but the people were sorely oppressed with levies. King Magnus was beloved by his men, but the bondes thought him harsh. The words have been transmitted from him that he said when his friends observed that he proceeded incautiously when he was on his expeditions abroad,— "The kings are made for honour, not for long life." King Magnus was nearly thirty years of age when he fell. Vidkun did not fly until he had killed the man who gave the king his mortal wound, and for this cause King Magnus's sons had him in the most affectionate regard.

SAGA OF SIGURD THE CRUSADER AND HIS BROTHERS EYSTEIN AND OLAF.

1. BEGINNING OF THE REIGN OF KING MAGNUS'S SONS.

After King Magnus Barefoot's fall, his sons, Eystein, Sigurd, and Olaf, took the kingdom of Norway. Eystein got the northern, and Sigurd the southern part of the country. King Olaf was then four or five years old, and the third part of the country which he had was under the management of his two brothers. King Sigurd was chosen king when he was thirteen or fourteen years old, and Eystein was a year older. King Sigurd left west of the sea the Irish king's daughter. When King Magnus's sons were chosen kings, the men who had followed Skopte Ogmundson returned home. Some had been to Jerusalem, some to Constantinople; and there they had made themselves renowned, and they had many kinds of novelties to talk about. By these extraordinary tidings many men in Norway were incited to the same expedition; and it was also told that the Northmen who liked to go into the military service at Constantinople found many opportunities of getting property. Then these Northmen desired much that one of the two kings, either Eystein or Sigurd, should go as commander of the troop which was preparing for this expedition. The kings agreed to this, and carried on the equipment at their common expense. Many great men, both of the lendermen and bondes, took part in this enterprise; and when all was ready for the journey it was determined that Sigurd should go, and Eystein in the meantime, should rule the kingdom upon their joint account.

2. OF THE EARLS OF ORKNEY.

A year or two after King Magnus Barefoot's fall, Hakon, a son of Earl Paul, came from Orkney. The kings gave him the earldom and government of the Orkney Islands, as the earls before him, his father Paul or his Uncle Erland, had possessed it; and Earl Hakon then sailed back immediately to Orkney.

3. KING SIGURD'S JOURNEY OUT OF THE COUNTRY.

Four years after the fall of King Magnus (A.D. 1107), King Sigurd sailed with his people from Norway. He had then sixty ships. So says Thorarin Stutfeld:—

A young king just and kind,
People of loyal mind:
Such brave men soon agree,—
To distant lands they sail with glee.
To the distant Holy Land
A brave and pious band,
Magnificent and gay,
In sixty long-ships glide away.

King Sigurd sailed in autumn to England, where Henry, son of William the Bastard, was then king, and Sigurd remained with him all winter. So says Einar Skulason:—

The king is on the waves!
The storm he boldly braves.
His ocean-steed,
With winged speed,
O'er the white-flashing surges,
To England's coast he urges;
And there he stays the winter o'er:
More gallant king ne'er trod that shore.

4. OF KING SIGURD'S JOURNEY.

In spring King Sigurd and his fleet sailed westward to Valland (A.D. 1108), and in autumn came to Galicia, where he stayed the second winter (A.D. 1109). So says Einar Skulason:—

Our king, whose land so wide
No kingdom stands beside,
In Jacob's land next winter spent,
On holy things intent;
And I have heard the royal youth
Cut off an earl who swerved from truth.
Our brave king will endure no ill,—
The hawks with him will get their fill.

It went thus:—The earl who ruled over the land made an agreement with King Sigurd, that he should provide King Sigurd and his men a market at which they could purchase victuals all the winter; but this he did not fulfil longer than to about Yule. It began then to be difficult to get food and necessities, for it is a poor barren land. Then King Sigurd with a great body of men went against a castle which belonged to the earl; and the earl fled from it, having but few people. King Sigurd took there a great deal of victuals and of other booty, which he put on board of his ships, and then made ready and proceeded westward to Spain. It so fell out, as the king was sailing past Spain, that some vikings who were cruising for plunder met him with a fleet of galleys, and King Sigurd attacked them. This was his first battle with heathen men; and he won it, and took eight galleys from them. So says Haldor Skvaldre:—

Bold vikings, not slow
To the death-fray to go,
Meet our Norse king by chance,
And their galleys advance.
The bold vikings lost
Many a man of their host,
And eight galleys too,
With cargo and crew.

Thereafter King Sigurd sailed against a castle called Sintre and fought another battle. This castle is in Spain, and was occupied by many heathens, who from thence plundered Christian people. King Sigurd took the castle, and killed every man in it, because they refused to be baptized; and he got there an immense booty. So says Haldor Skvaldre:—

From Spain I have much news to tell
Of what our generous king befell.
And first he routs the viking crew,
At Cintra next the heathens slew;
The men he treated as God's foes,
Who dared the true faith to oppose.
No man he spared who would not take
The Christian faith for Jesus' sake.

5. LISBON TAKEN.

After this King Sigurd sailed with his fleet to Lisbon, which is a great city in Spain, half Christian and half heathen; for there lies the division between Christian Spain and heathen Spain, and all the districts which lie west of the city are occupied by heathens. There King Sigurd had his third battle with the heathens, and gained the victory, and with it a great booty. So says Haldor Skvaldre:—

The son of kings on Lisbon's plains
A third and bloody battle gains.
He and his Norsemen boldly land,
Running their stout ships on the strand.

Then King Sigurd sailed westwards along heathen Spain, and brought up at a town called Alkasse; and here he had his fourth battle with the heathens, and took the town, and killed so many people that the town was left empty. They got there also immense booty. So says Haldor Skvaldre:—

A fourth great battle, I am told,
Our Norse king and his people hold
At Alkasse; and here again
The victory fell to our Norsemen.

And also this verse:—

I heard that through the town he went,
And heathen widows' wild lament
Resounded in the empty halls;
For every townsman flies or falls.

6. BATTLE IN THE ISLAND FORMINTERRA.

King Sigurd then proceeded on his voyage, and came to Norfasund; and in the sound he was met by a large viking force, and the king gave them battle; and this was his fifth engagement with heathens since the time he left Norway. He gained the victory here also. So says Haldor Skvaldre:—

Ye moistened your dry swords with blood,
As through Norfasund ye stood;
The screaming raven got a feast,
As ye sailed onward to the East.

King Sigurd then sailed eastward along the coast of Serkland, and came to an island there called Forminterra. There a great many heathen Moors had taken up their dwelling in a cave, and had built a strong stone wall before its mouth. They harried the country all round, and carried all their booty to their cave. King Sigurd landed on this island, and went to the cave; but it lay in a precipice, and there was a high winding path to the stone wall, and the precipice above projected over it. The heathens defended the stone wall, and were not afraid of the Northmen's arms; for they could throw stones, or shoot down upon the Northmen under their feet; neither did the Northmen, under such circumstances, dare to mount up. The heathens took their clothes and other valuable things, carried them out upon the wall, spread them out before the Northmen, shouted, and defied them, and upbraided them as cowards. Then Sigurd fell upon this plan. He had two ship's boats, such as we call barks, drawn up the precipice right above the mouth of the cave; and had thick ropes fastened around the stem, stern, and hull of each. In these boats as many men went as could find room, and then the boats were lowered by the ropes down in front of the mouth of the cave; and the men in the boats shot with stones and missiles into the cave, and the heathens were thus driven from the stone wall. Then Sigurd with his troops climbed up the precipice to the foot of the stone wall, which they succeeded in breaking down, so that they came into the cave. Now the heathens fled within the stone wall that was built across the cave; on which the king ordered large trees to be brought to the cave, made a great pile in the mouth of it, and set fire to the wood. When the fire and smoke got the upper hand, some of the heathens lost their lives in it; some fled; some fell by the hands of the Northmen; and part were killed, part burned; and the Northmen made the greatest booty they had got on all their expeditions. So says Halder Skvaldre:—

Forminterra lay
In the victor's way;
His ships' stems fly
To victory.
The blumen there
Must fire bear,
And Norsemen's steel
At their hearts feel.

And also thus:—

'Twas a feat of renown,—
The boat lowered down,
With a boat's crew brave,
In front of the cave;
While up the rock scaling,
And comrades up trailing,
The Norsemen gain,
And the blumen are slain.

And also Thorarin Stutfeld says:—

The king's men up the mountain's side
Drag two boats from the ocean's tide;
The two boats lay,
Like hill-wolves grey.
Now o'er the rock in ropes they're swinging
Well manned, and death to blumen bringing;
They hang before
The robber's door.

7. OF THE BATTLES OF IVIZA AND MINORCA.

Thereafter King Sigurd proceeded on his expedition, and came to an island called Iviza (Ivica), and had there his seventh battle, and gained a victory. So says Haldor Skvaldre:—

His ships at Ivica now ride,
The king's, whose fame spreads far and wide;
And hear the bearers of the shield
Their arms again in battle wield.

Thereafter King Sigurd came to an island called Manork (Minorca), and held there his eighth battle with heathen men, and gained the victory. So says Haldor Skvaldre:—

On green Minorca's plains
The eighth battle now he gains:
Again the heathen foe
Falls at the Norse king's blow.

8. DUKE ROGER MADE A KING.

In spring King Sigurd came to Sicily (A.D. 1109), and remained a long time there. There was then a Duke Roger in Sicily, who received the king kindly, and invited him to a feast. King Sigurd came to it with a great retinue, and was splendidly entertained. Every day Duke Roger stood at the company's table, doing service to the king; but the seventh day of the feast, when the people had come to table, and had wiped their hands, King Sigurd took the duke by the hand, led him up to the high-seat, and saluted him with the title of king; and gave the right that there should be always a king over the dominion of Sicily, although before there had only been earls or dukes over that country.

9. OF KING ROGER.

King Roger of Sicily was a very great king. He won and subdued all Apulia, and many large islands besides in the Greek sea; and therefore he was called Roger the Great. His son was William, king of Sicily, who for a long time had great hostility with the emperor of Constantinople. King William had three daughters, but no son. One of his daughters he married to the Emperor Henry, a son of the Emperor Frederik; and their son was Frederik, who for a short time after was emperor of Rome. His second daughter was married to the Duke of Kipr. The third daughter, Margaret, was married to the chief of the corsairs; but the Emperor Henry killed both these brothers-in-law. The daughter of Roger the Great, king of Sicily, was married to the Emperor Manuel of Constantinople; and their son was the Emperor Kirjalax.

10. KING SIGURD'S EXPEDITION TO PALESTINE.

In the summer (A.D. 1110) King Sigurd sailed across the Greek sea to Palestine, and thereupon went up to Jerusalem, where he met Baldwin, king of Palestine. King Baldwin received him particularly well, and rode with him all the way to the river Jordan, and then back to the city of Jerusalem. Einar Skulason speaks thus of it:—

Good reason has the skald to sing
The generous temper of the king,
Whose sea-cold keel from northern waves
Ploughs the blue sea that green isles laves.
At Acre scarce were we made fast,
In holy ground our anchors cast,
When the king made a joyful morn
To all who toil with him had borne.

And again he made these lines:—

To Jerusalem he came,
He who loves war's noble game,
(The skald no greater monarch finds
Beneath the heaven's wide hall of winds)
All sin and evil from him flings
In Jordan's wave: for all his sins
(Which all must praise) he pardon wins.

King Sigurd stayed a long time in the land of Jerusalem (Jerusalaland) in autumn, and in the beginning of winter.

11. SIDON TAKEN.

King Baldwin made a magnificent feast for King Sigurd and many of his people, and gave him many holy relics. By the orders of King Baldwin and the patriarch, there was taken a splinter off the holy cross; and on this holy relic both made oath, that this wood was of the holy cross upon which God Himself had been tortured. Then this holy relic was given to King Sigurd; with the condition that he, and twelve other men with him, should swear to promote Christianity with all his power, and erect an archbishop's seat in Norway if he could; and also that the cross should be kept where the holy King Olaf reposed, and that he should introduce tithes, and also pay them himself. After this King Sigurd returned to his ships at Acre; and then King Baldwin prepared to go to Syria, to a heathen town called Saet. On this expedition King Sigurd accompanied him, and after the kings had besieged the town some time it surrendered, and they took possession of it, and of a great treasure of money; and their men found other booty. King Sigurd made a present of his share to King Baldwin. So say Haldor Skvaldre:—

He who for wolves provides the feast
Seized on the city in the East,
The heathen nest; and honour drew,
And gold to give, from those he slew.

Einar Skulason also tells of it:—

The Norsemen's king, the skalds relate,
Has ta'en the heathen town of Saet:
The slinging engine with dread noise
Gables and roofs with stones destroys.
The town wall totters too,—it falls;
The Norsemen mount the blackened walls.
He who stains red the raven's bill
Has won,—the town lies at his will.

Thereafter King Sigurd went to his ships and made ready to leave Palestine. They sailed north to the island Cyprus; and King Sigurd stayed there a while, and then went to the Greek country, and came to the land with all his fleet at Engilsnes. Here he lay still for a fortnight, although every day it blew a breeze for going before the wind to the north; but Sigurd would wait a side wind, so that the sails might stretch fore and aft in the ship; for in all his sails there was silk joined in, before and behind in the sail, and neither those before nor those behind the ships could see the slightest appearance of this, if the vessel was before the wind; so they would rather wait a side wind.

12. SIGURD'S EXPEDITION TO CONSTANTINOPLE.

When King Sigurd sailed into Constantinople, he steered near the land. Over all the land there are burghs, castles, country towns, the one upon the other without interval. There from the land one could see into the bights of the sails; and the sails stood so close beside each other, that they seemed to form one enclosure. All the people turned out to see King Sigurd sailing past. The Emperor Kirjalax had also heard of King Sigurd's expedition, and ordered the city port of Constantinople to be opened, which is called the Gold Tower, through which the emperor rides when he has been long absent from Constantinople, or has made a campaign in which he has been victorious. The emperor had precious cloths spread out from the Gold Tower to Laktjarna, which is the name of the emperor's most splendid hall. King Sigurd ordered his men to ride in great state into the city, and not to regard all the new things they might see; and this they did. King Sigurd and his followers rode with this great splendour into Constantinople, and then came to the magnificent hall, where everything was in the grandest style.

King Sigurd remained here some time. The Emperor Kirjalax sent his men to him to ask if he would rather accept from the emperor six lipund of gold, or would have the emperor give the games in his honour which the emperor was used to have played at the Padreim. King Sigurd preferred the games, and the messengers said the spectacle would not cost the emperor less than the money offered. Then the emperor prepared for the games, which were held in the usual way; but this day everything went on better for the king than for the queen; for the queen has always the half part in the games, and their men, therefore, always strive against each other in all games. The Greeks accordingly think that when the king's men win more games at the Padreim than the queen's, the king will gain the victory when he goes into battle. People who have been in Constantinople tell that the Padreim is thus constructed:—A high wall surrounds a flat plain, which may be compared to a round bare Thing-place, with earthen banks all around at the stone wall, on which banks the spectators sit; but the games themselves are in the flat plain. There are many sorts of old events represented concerning the Asas, Volsungs, and Giukungs, in these games; and all the figures are cast in copper, or metal, with so great art that they appear to be living things; and to the people it appears as if they were really present in the games. The games themselves are so artfully and cleverly managed, that people appear to be riding in the air; and at them also are used shot-fire, and all kinds of harp-playing, singing, and music instruments.

13. SIGURD AND THE EMPEROR OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

It is related that King Sigurd one day was to give the emperor a feast, and he ordered his men to provide sumptuously all that was necessary for the entertainment; and when all things were provided which are suitable for an entertainment given by a great personage to persons of high dignity, King Sigurd ordered his men to go to the street in the city where firewood was sold, as they would require a great quantity to prepare the feast. They said the king need not be afraid of wanting firewood, for every day many loads were brought into the town. When it was necessary, however, to have firewood, it was found that it was all sold, which they told the king. He replied, "Go and try if you can get walnuts. They will answer as well as wood for fuel." They went and got as many as they needed. Now came the emperor, and his grandees and court, and sat down to table. All was very splendid; and King Sigurd received the emperor with great state, and entertained him magnificently. When the queen and the emperor found that nothing was wanting, she sent some persons to inquire what they had used for firewood; and they came to a house filled with walnuts, and they came back and told the queen. "Truly," said she, "this is a magnificent king, who spares no expense where his honour is concerned." She had contrived this to try what they would do when they could get no firewood to dress their feast with.

14. KING SIGURD THE CRUSADER'S RETURN HOME.

King Sigurd soon after prepared for his return home. He gave the emperor all his ships; and the valuable figureheads which were on the king's ships were set up in Peter's church, where they have since been to be seen. The emperor gave the king many horses and guides to conduct him through all his dominions. Then King Sigurd left Constantinople; but a great many Northmen remained, and went into the emperor's pay. Then King Sigurd traveled from Bulgaria, and through Hungary, Pannonia, Suabia, and Bavaria, where he met the Roman emperor, Lotharius, who received him in the most friendly way, gave him guides through his dominions, and had markets established for him at which he could purchase all he required. When King Sigurd came to Slesvik in Denmark, Earl Eilif made a sumptuous feast for him; and it was then mid-summer. In Heidaby he met the Danish king, Nikolas, who received him in the most friendly way, made a great entertainment for him, accompanied him north to Jutland, and gave him a ship provided with everything needful. From thence the king returned to Norway, and was joyfully welcomed on his return to his kingdom (A.D. 1110). It was the common talk among the people, that none had ever made so honourable a journey from Norway as this of King Sigurd. He was twenty years of age, and had been three years on these travels. His brother Olaf was then twelve years old.

15. EYSTEIN'S DOINGS IN THE MEANTIME.

King Eystein had also effected much in the country that was useful while King Sigurd was on his journey. He established a monastery at Nordnes in Bergen, and endowed it with much property. He also built Michael's church, which is a very splendid stone temple. In the king's house there he also built the Church of the Apostles, and the great hall, which is the most magnificent wooden structure that was ever built in Norway. He also built a church at Agdanes with a parapet; and a harbour, where formerly there had been a barren spot only. In Nidaros he built in the king's street the church of Saint Nikolas, which was particularly ornamented with carved work, and all in wood. He also built a church north in Vagar in Halogaland, and endowed it with property and revenues.

16. OF KING EYSTEIN.

King Eystein sent a verbal message to the most intelligent and powerful of the men of Jamtaland, and invited them to him; received them all as they came with great kindness; accompanied them part of the way home, and gave them presents, and thus enticed them into a friendship with him. Now as many of them became accustomed to visit him and receive gifts from him, and he also sent gifts to some who did not come themselves, he soon gained the favour of all the people who had most influence in the country. Then he spoke to the Jamtaland people, and told them they had done ill in turning away from the kings of Norway, and withdrawing from them their taxes and allegiance. He began by saying how the Jamtaland people had submitted to the reign of Hakon, the foster-son of Athelstane, and had long afterwards been subjected to the kings of Norway, and he represented to them how many useful things they could get from Norway, and how inconvenient it was for them to apply to the Swedish king for what they needed. By these speeches he brought matters so far that the Jamtaland people of their own accord offered to be subject to him, which they said was useful and necessary for them; and thus, on both sides, it was agreed that the Jamtalanders should put their whole country under King Eystein. The first beginning was with the men of consequence, who persuaded the people to take an oath of fidelity to King Eystein; and then they went to King Eystein and confirmed the country to him by oath; and this arrangement has since continued for a long time. King Eystein thus conquered Jamtaland by his wisdom, and not by hostile inroads, as some of his forefathers had done.

17. OF KING EYSTEIN'S PERFECTIONS.

King Eystein was the handsomest man that could be seen. He had blue open eyes; his hair yellow and curling; his stature not tall, but of the middle size. He was wise, intelligent, and acquainted with the laws and history. He had much knowledge of mankind, was quick in counsel, prudent in words, and very eloquent and very generous. He was very merry, yet modest; and was liked and beloved, indeed, by all the people. He was married to Ingebjorg, a daughter of Guthorm, son of Thorer of Steig; and their daughter was Maria, who afterwards married Gudbrand Skafhogson.

18. OF IVAR INGIMUNDSON.

King Eystein had in many ways improved the laws and privileges of the country people, and kept strictly to the laws; and he made himself acquainted with all the laws of Norway, and showed in everything great prudence and understanding. What a valuable man King Eystein was, how full of friendship, and how much he turned his mind to examining and avoiding everything that could be of disadvantage to his friends, may be seen from his friendship to an Iceland man called Ivar Ingimundson. The man was witty, of great family, and also a poet. The king saw that Ivar was out of spirits, and asked him why he was so melancholy. "Before, when thou wast with us, we had much amusement with thy conversation. I know thou art a man of too good an understanding to believe that I would do anything against thee. Tell me then what it is."

He replied, "I cannot tell thee what it is."

Then said the king, "I will try to guess what it is. Are there any men who displease thee?"

To this he replied, "No."

"Dost thou think thou art held in less esteem by me than thou wouldst like to be?"

To this he also replied, "No."

"Hast thou observed anything whatever that has made an impression on thee at which thou art ill pleased?"

He replied, it was not this either.

The king: "Would you like to go to other chiefs or to other men?"

To this he answered, "No."

The king: "It is difficult now to guess. Is there any girl here, or in any other country, to whom thy affections are engaged?"

He said it was so.

The king said, "Do not be melancholy on that account. Go to Iceland when spring sets in, and I shall give thee money, and presents, and with these my letters and seal to the men who have the principal sway there; and I know no man there who will not obey my persuasions or threats."

Ivar replied, "My fate is heavier, sire; for my own brother has the girl."

Then said the king, "Throw it out of thy mind; and I know a counsel against this. After Yule I will travel in guest-quarters. Thou shalt come along with me, and thou wilt have an opportunity of seeing many beautiful girls; and, provided they are not of the royal stock, I will get thee one of them in marriage."

Ivar replies, "Sire, my fate is still the heavier; for as oft as I see beautiful and excellent girls I only remember the more that girl, and they increase my misery."

The king: "Then I will give thee property to manage, and estates for thy amusement."

He replied, "For that I have no desire."

The king: "Then I will give thee money, that thou mayest travel in other countries."

He said he did not wish this.

Then said the king, "It is difficult for me to seek farther, for I have proposed everything that occurs to me. There is but one thing else; and that is but little compared to what I have offered thee. Come to me every day after the tables are removed, and, if I am not sitting upon important business, I shall talk with thee about the girl in every way that I can think of; and I shall do so at leisure. It sometimes happens that sorrow is lightened by being brought out openly; and thou shalt never go away without some gift."

He replied, "This I will do, sire, and return thanks for this inquiry."

And now they did so constantly; and when the king was not occupied with weightier affairs he talked with him, and his sorrow by degrees wore away, and he was again in good spirits.

19. OF KING SIGURD.

King Sigurd was a stout and strong man, with brown hair; of a manly appearance, but not handsome; well grown; of little speech, and often not friendly, but good to his friends, and faithful; not very eloquent, but moral and polite. King Sigurd was self-willed, and severe in his revenge; strict in observing the law; was generous; and withal an able, powerful king. His brother Olaf was a tall, thin man; handsome in countenance; lively, modest, and popular. When all these brothers, Eystein, Sigurd and Olaf were kings of Norway, they did away with many burthens which the Danes had laid upon the people in the time that Svein Alfifason ruled Norway; and on this account they were much beloved, both by the people and the great men of the country.

20. OF KING SIGURD'S DREAM.

Once King Sigurd fell into low spirits, so that few could get him to converse, and he sat but a short time at the drinking table. This was heavy on his counsellors, friends, and court; and they begged King Eystein to consider how they could discover the cause why the people who came to the king could get no reply to what they laid before him. King Eystein answered them, that it was difficult to speak with the king about this; but at last, on the entreaty of many, he promised to do it. Once, when they were both together, King Eystein brought the matter before his brother, and asked the cause of his melancholy. "It is a great grief, sire, to many to see thee so melancholy; and we would like to know what has occasioned it, or if perchance thou hast heard any news of great weight?"

King Sigurd replies, that it was not so.

"Is it then, brother," says King Eystein, "that you would like to travel out of the country, and augment your dominions as our father did?"

He answered, that it was not that either.

"Is it, then, that any man here in the country has offended?"

To this also the king said "No."

"Then I would like to know if you have dreamt anything that has occasioned this depression of mind?"

The king answered that it was so.

"Tell me, then, brother, thy dream."

King Sigurd said, "I will not tell it, unless thou interpret it as it may turn out; and I shall be quick at perceiving if thy interpretation be right or not."

King Eystein replies, "This is a very difficult matter, sire, on both sides; as I am exposed to thy anger if I cannot interpret it, and to the blame of the public if I can do nothing in the matter; but I will rather fall under your displeasure, even if my interpretation should not be agreeable."

King Sigurd replies, "It appeared to me, in a dream, as if we brothers were all sitting on a bench in front of Christ church in Thronhjelm; and it appeared to me as if our relative, King Olaf the Saint, came out of the church adorned with the royal raiment glancing and splendid, and with the most delightful and joyful countenance. He went to our brother King Olaf, took him by the hand, and said cheerfully, to him, 'Come with me, friend.' On which he appeared to stand up and go into the church. Soon after King Olaf the Saint came out of the church, but not so gay and brilliant as before. Now he went to thee, brother, and said to thee that thou shouldst go with him; on which he led thee with him, and ye went into the church. Then I thought, and waited for it, that he would come to me, and meet me; but it was not so. Then I was seized with great sorrow, and great dread and anxiety fell upon me, so that I was altogether without strength; and then I awoke."

King Eystein replies, "Thus I interpret your dream, sire,—That the bench betokens the kingdom we brothers have; and as you thought King Olaf came with so glad a countenance to our brother,

King Olaf, he will likely live the shortest time of us brothers, and have all good to expect hereafter; for he is amiable, young in years, and has gone but little into excess, and King Olaf the Saint must help him. But as you thought he came towards me, but not with so much joy, I may possibly live a few years longer, but not become old, and I trust his providence will stand over me; but that he did not come to me with the same splendour and glory as to our brother Olaf, that will be because, in many ways, I have sinned and transgressed his command. If he delayed coming to thee, I think that in no way betokens thy death, but rather a long life; but it may be that some heavy accident may occur to thee, as there was an unaccountable dread overpowering thee; but I foretell that thou wilt be the oldest of us, and wilt rule the kingdom longest."

Then said Sigurd, "This is well and intelligently interpreted, and it is likely it will be so." And now the king began to be cheerful again.

21. OF KING SIGURD'S MARRIAGE.

King Sigurd married Malmfrid, a daughter of King Harald Valdemarson, eastward in Novgorod. King Harald Valdemarson's mother was Queen Gyda the Old, a daughter of the Swedish king, Inge Steinkelson. Harald Valdemarson's other daughter, sister to Malmfrid, was Ingebjorg, who was married to Canute Lavard, a son of the Danish king, Eirik the Good, and grandson of King Svein Ulfson. Canute's and Ingebjorg's children were, the Danish king, Valdemar, who came to the Danish kingdom after Svein Eirikson; and daughters Margaret, Christina, and Catherine. Margaret was married to Stig Hvitedale; and their daughter was Christina, married to the Swedish king, Karl Sorkvison, and their son was King Sorkver.

22. OF THE CASES BEFORE THE THING.

The king's relative, Sigurd Hranason, came into strife with King Sigurd. He had had the Lapland collectorship on the king's account, because of their relationship and long friendship, and also of the many services Sigurd Hranason had done to the kings; for he was a very distinguished, popular man. But it happened to him, as it often does to others, that persons more wicked and jealous than upright slandered him to King Sigurd, and whispered in the king's ear that he took more of the Laplander's tribute to himself than was proper. They spoke so long about this, that King Sigurd conceived a dislike and anger to him, and sent a message to him. When he appeared before the king, the king carried these feelings with him, and said, "I did not expect that thou shouldst have repaid me for thy great fiefs and other dignities by taking the king's property, and abstracting a greater portion of it than is allowable."

Sigurd Hranason replies, "It is not true that has been told you; for I have only taken such portion as I had your permission to take."

King Sigurd replies, "Thou shalt not slip away with this; but the matter shall be seriously treated before it comes to an end." With that they parted.

Soon after, by the advice of his friends, the king laid an action against Sigurd Hranason at the Thing-meeting in Bergen, and would have him made an outlaw. Now when the business took this turn, and appeared so dangerous, Sigurd Hranason went to King Eystein, and told him what mischief King Sigurd intended to do him, and entreated his assistance. King Eystein replied, "This is a difficult matter that you propose to me, to speak against my brother; and there is a great difference between defending a cause and pursuing it in law;" and added, that this was a matter which concerned him and Sigurd equally. "But for thy distress, and our relationship, I shall bring in a word for thee."

Soon after Eystein visited King Sigurd, and entreated him to spare the man, reminding him of the relationship between them and Sigurd Hranason, who was married to their aunt, Skialdvor; and said he would pay the penalty for the crime committed against the king, although he could not with truth impute any blame to him in the matter. Besides, he reminded the king of the long friendship with Sigurd Hranason. King Sigurd replied, that it was better government to punish such acts. Then King Eystein replied, "If thou, brother, wilt follow the law, and punish such acts ac-

cording to the country's privileges, then it would be most correct that Sigurd Hranason produce his witnesses, and that the case be judged at the Thing, but not at a meeting; for the case comes under the law of the land, not under Bjarkey law." Then said Sigurd, "It may possibly be so that the case belongs to it, as thou sayest, King Eystein; and if it be against law what has hitherto been done in this case, then we shall bring it before the Thing." Then the kings parted, and each seemed determined to take his own way. King Sigurd summoned the parties in the case before the Arnarnes Thing, and intended to pursue it there. King Eystein came also to the Thing-place; and when the case was brought forward for judgment, King Eystein went to the Thing before judgment was given upon Sigurd Hranason. Now King Sigurd told the lagmen to pronounce the judgment; but King Eystein replied thus: "I trust there are here men acquainted sufficiently with the laws of Norway, to know that they cannot condemn a lendermen to be outlawed at this Thing." And he then explained how the law was, so that every man clearly understood it. Then said King Sigurd, "Thou art taking up this matter very warmly, King Eystein, and it is likely the case will cost more trouble before it comes to an end than we intended; but nevertheless we shall follow it out. I will have him condemned to be outlawed in his native place." Then said King Eystein, "There are certainly not many things which do not succeed with thee, and especially when there are but few and small folks to oppose one who has carried through such great things." And thus they parted, without anything being concluded in the case. Thereafter King Sigurd called together a Gula Thing, went himself there, and summoned to him many high chiefs. King Eystein came there also with his suite; and many meetings and conferences were held among people of understanding concerning this case, and it was tried and examined before the lagmen. Now King Eystein objected that all the parties summoned in any cases tried here belonged to the Thing-district; but in this case the deed and the parties belonged to Halogaland. The Thing accordingly ended in doing nothing, as King Eystein had thus made it incompetent. The kings parted in great wrath; and King Eystein went north to Throndhjem. King Sigurd, on the other hand, summoned to him all lendermen, and also the house-servants of the lendermen, and named out of every district a number of the bondes from the south parts of the country, so that he had collected a large army about him; and proceeded with all this crowd northwards along the coast to Halogaland, and intended to use all his power to make Sigurd Hranason an outlaw among his own relations. For this purpose he summoned to him the Halogaland and Naumudal people, and appointed a Thing at Hrafnista. King Eystein prepared himself also, and proceeded with many people from the town of Nidaros to the Thing, where he made Sigurd Hranason, by hand-shake before witnesses, deliver over to him the following and defending this case. At this Thing both the kings spoke, each for his own side. Then King Eystein asks the lagmen where that law was made in Norway which gave the bondes the right to judge between the kings of the country, when they had pleas with each other. "I shall bring witnesses to prove that Sigurd has given the case into my hands; and it is with me, not with Sigurd Hranason, that King Sigurd has to do in this case." The lagmen said that disputes between kings must be judged only at the Eyra Thing in Nidaros.

King Eystein said, "So I thought that it should be there, and the cases must be removed there."

Then King Sigurd said, "The more difficulties and inconvenience thou bringest upon me in this matter, the more I will persevere in it." And with that they parted.

Both kings then went south to Nidaros town, where they summoned a Thing from eight districts. King Eystein was in the town with a great many people, but Sigurd was on board his ships. When the Thing was opened, peace and safe conduct was given to all; and when the people were all collected, and the case should be gone into, Bergthor, a son of Svein Bryggjufot, stood up, and gave his evidence that Sigurd Hranason had concealed a part of the Laplanders' taxes.

Then King Eystein stood up and said, "If thy accusation were true, although we do not know what truth there may be in thy testimony, yet this case has already been dismissed from three

Things, and a fourth time from a town meeting; and therefore I require that the lagmen acquit Sigurd in this case according to law." And they did so.

Then said King Sigurd, "I see sufficiently, King Eystein, that thou hast carried this case by law-quirks, which I do not understand. But now there remains, King Eystein, a way of determining the case which I am more used to, and which I shall now apply."

He then retired to his ships, had the tents taken down, laid his whole fleet out at the holm, and held a Thing of his people; and told them that early in the morning they should land at Iluvellir, and give battle to King Eystein. But in the evening, as King Sigurd sat at his table in his ship taking his repast, before he was aware of it a man cast himself on the floor of the forehold, and at the king's feet. This was Sigurd Hranason, who begged the king to take what course with regard to him the king himself thought proper. Then came Bishop Magne and Queen Malmfrid, and many other great personages, and entreated forgiveness for Sigurd Hranason; and at their entreaty the king raised him up, took him by the hand, and placed him among his men, and took him along with himself to the south part of the country. In autumn the king gave Sigurd Hranason leave to go north to his farm, gave him an employment, and was always afterward his friend. After this day, however, the brothers were never much together, and there was no cordiality or cheerfulness among them.

23. OF KING OLAF'S DEATH.

King Olaf Magnuson fell into a sickness which ended in his death. He was buried in Christ church in Nidaros, and many were in great grief at his death. After Olaf's death, Eystein and Sigurd ruled the country, the three brothers together having been kings of Norway for twelve years (A.D. 1104-1115); namely, five years after King Sigurd returned home, and seven years before. King Olaf was seventeen years old when he died, and it happened on the 24th of December.

24. MAGNUS THE BLIND; HIS BIRTH.

King Eystein had been about a year in the east part of the country at that time, and King Sigurd was then in the north. King Eystein remained a long time that winter in Sarpsborg. There was once a powerful and rich bonde called Olaf of Dal, who dwelt in Great Dal in Aumord, and had two children,—a son called Hakon Fauk, and a daughter called Borghild, who was a very beautiful girl, and prudent, and well skilled in many things. Olaf and his children were a long time in winter in Sarpsborg, and Borghild conversed very often with King Eystein; so that many reports were spread about their friendship. The following summer King Eystein went north, and King Sigurd came eastward, where he remained all winter, and was long in Konungahella, which town he greatly enlarged and improved. He built there a great castle of turf and stone, dug a great ditch around it, and built a church and several houses within the castle. The holy cross he allowed to remain at Konungahella, and therein did not fulfill the oath he had taken in Palestine; but, on the other hand, he established tithe, and most of the other things to which he had bound himself by oath. The reason of his keeping the cross east at the frontier of the country was, that he thought it would be a protection to all the land; but it proved the greatest misfortune to place this relic within the power of the heathens, as it afterwards turned out.

When Borghild, Olaf's daughter, heard it whispered that people talked ill of her conversations and intimacy with King Eystein, she went to Sarpsborg; and after suitable fasts she carried the iron as proof of her innocence, and cleared herself thereby fully from all offence. When King Sigurd heard this, he rode one day as far as usually was two days' travelling, and came to Dal to Olaf, where he remained all night, made Borghild his concubine, and took her away with him. They had a son, who was called Magnus, and he was sent immediately to Halogaland, to be fostered at Bjarkey by Vidkun Jonson; and he was brought up there. Magnus grew up to be the handsomest man that could be seen, and was very soon stout and strong.

25. COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TWO KINGS.

King Eystein and King Sigurd went both in spring to guest-quarters in the Uplands; and each was entertained in a separate house, and the houses were not very distant from each other. The bondes, however, thought it more convenient that both should be entertained together by turns in each house; and thus they were both at first in the house of King Eystein. But in the evening, when the people began to drink, the ale was not good; so that the guests were very quiet and still. Then said King Eystein, "Why are the people so silent? It is more usual in drinking parties that people are merry, so let us fall upon some jest over our ale that will amuse people; for surely, brother Sigurd, all people are well pleased when we talk cheerfully."

Sigurd replies, bluntly, "Do you talk as much as you please, but give me leave to be silent."

Eystein says, "It is a common custom over the ale-table to compare one person with another, and now let us do so." Then Sigurd was silent.

"I see," says King Eystein, "that I must begin this amusement. Now I will take thee, brother, to compare myself with, and will make it appear so as if we had both equal reputation and property, and that there is no difference in our birth and education."

Then King Sigurd replies, "Do you remember that I was always able to throw you when we wrestled, although you are a year older?"

Then King Eystein replied, "But I remember that you was not so good at the games which require agility."

Sigurd: "Do you remember that I could drag you under water, when we swam together, as often as I pleased?"

Eystein: "But I could swim as far as you, and could dive as well as you; and I could run upon snow-skates so well that nobody could beat me, and you could no more do it than an ox."

Sigurd: "Methinks it is a more useful and suitable accomplishment for a chief to be expert at his bow; and I think you could scarcely draw my bow, even if you took your foot to help."

Eystein: "I am not strong at the bow as you are, but there is less difference between our shooting near; and I can use the skees much better than you, and in former times that was held a great accomplishment."

Sigurd: "It appears to me much better for a chief who is to be the superior of other men, that he is conspicuous in a crowd, and strong and powerful in weapons above other men; easily seen, and easily known, where there are many together."

Eystein: "It is not less a distinction and an ornament that a man is of a handsome appearance, so as to be easily known from others on that account; and this appears to me to suit a chief best, because the best ornament is allied to beauty. I am moreover more knowing in the law than you, and on every subject my words flow more easily than yours."

Sigurd: "It may be that you know more law-quirks, for I have had something else to do; neither will any deny you a smooth tongue. But there are many who say that your words are not to be trusted; that what you promise is little to be regarded; and that you talk just according to what those who are about you say, which is not kingly."

Eystein: "This is because, when people bring their cases before me, I wish first to give every man that satisfaction in his affairs which he desires; but afterwards comes the opposite party, and then there is something to be given or taken away very often, in order to mediate between them, so that both may be satisfied. It often happens, too, that I promise whatever is desired of me, that all may be joyful about me. It would be an easy matter for me to do as you do,—to promise evil to all; and I never hear any complain of your not keeping this promise to them."

Sigurd: "It is the conversation of all that the expedition that I made out of the country was a princely expedition, while you in the meantime sat at home like your father's daughter."

Eystein: "Now you touched the tender spot. I would not have brought up this conversation if I had not known what to reply on this point. I can truly say that I equipt you from home like a sister, before you went upon this expedition."

Sigurd: "You must have heard that on this expedition I was in many a battle in the Saracen's land, and gained the victory in all; and you must have heard of the many valuable articles I acquired, the like of which were never seen before in this country, and I was the most respected wherever the most gallant men were; and, on the other hand, you cannot conceal that you have only a home-bred reputation."

Eystein: "I have heard that you had several battles abroad, but it was more useful for the country what I was doing in the meantime here at home. I built five churches from the foundations, and a harbour out at Agdanes, where it before was impossible to land, and where vessels ply north and south along the coast. I set a warping post and iron ring in the sound of Sinholm, and in Bergen I built a royal hall, while you were killing bluiemen for the devil in Serkland. This, I think, was of but little advantage to our kingdom."

King Sigurd said: "On this expedition I went all the way to Jordan and swam across the river. On the edge of the river there is a bush of willows, and there I twisted a knot of willows, and said this knot thou shouldst untie, brother, or take the curse thereto attached."

King Eystein said: "I shall not go and untie the knot which you tied for me; but if I had been inclined to tie a knot for thee, thou wouldst not have been king of Norway at thy return to this country, when with a single ship you came sailing into my fleet."

Thereupon both were silent, and there was anger on both sides. More things passed between the brothers, from which it appeared that each of them would be greater than the other; however, peace was preserved between them as long as they lived.

26. OF KING SIGURD'S SICKNESS.

King Sigurd was at a feast in the Upland, and a bath was made ready for him. When the king came to the bath and the tent was raised over the bathing-tub, the king thought there was a fish in the tub beside him; and a great laughter came upon him, so that he was beside himself, and was out of his mind, and often afterwards these fits returned.

Magnus Barefoot's daughter, Ragnhild, was married by her brothers to Harald Kesia, a son of the Danish king, Eirik the Good; and their sons were Magnus, Olaf, Knut and Harald.

27. OF KING EYSTEIN'S DEATH.

King Eystein built a large ship at Nidaros, which, in size and shape, was like the Long Serpent which King Olaf Trygvason had built. At the stem there was a dragon's head, and at the stern a crooked tail, and both were gilded over. The ship was high-sided; but the fore and aft parts appeared less than they should be. He also made in Nidaros many and large dry-docks of the best material, and well timbered.

Six years after King Olaf's death, it happened that King Eystein, at a feast at Hustadir in Stim, was seized with an illness which soon carried him off. He died the 29th of August, 1123, and his body was carried north to Nidaros, and buried in Christ church; and it is generally said that so many mourners never stood over any man's grave in Norway as over King Eystein's, at least since the time Magnus the Good, Saint Olaf's son, died. Eystein had been twenty years (A.D. 1104-1123) king of Norway; and after his decease his brother, King Sigurd, was the sole king of Norway as long as he lived.

28. BAPTIZING THE PEOPLE OF SMALAND.

The Danish king, Nikolas, a son of Svein Ulfson, married afterwards the Queen Margaret, a daughter of King Inge, who had before been married to King Magnus Barefoot; and their sons were Nikolas and Magnus the Strong. King Nikolas sent a message to King Sigurd the Crusader, and asked him if he would go with him with all his might and help him to the east of the Swedish dominion, Smaland, to baptize the inhabitants; for the people who dwelt there had no regard for Christianity, although some of them had allowed themselves to be baptized. At that time there were many people all around in the Swedish dominions who were heathens,

and many were bad Christians; for there were some of the kings who renounced Christianity, and continued heathen sacrifices, as Blotsvein, and afterwards Eirik Arsale, had done. King Sigurd promised to undertake this journey, and the kings appointed their meeting at Eyrarsund. King Sigurd then summoned all people in Norway to a levy, both of men and ships; and when the fleet was assembled he had about 300 ships. King Nikolas came very early to the meeting-place, and stayed there a long time; and the bondes murmured much, and said the Northmen did not intend to come. Thereupon the Danish army dispersed, and the king went away with all his fleet. King Sigurd came there soon afterwards, and was ill pleased; but sailed east to Svimiraros, and held a House-thing, at which Sigurd spoke about King Nikolas's breach of faith, and the Northmen, on this account, determined to go marauding in his country. They first plundered a village called Tumathorp, which is not far from Lund; and then sailed east to the merchant-town of Calmar, where they plundered, as well as in Smaland, and imposed on the country a tribute of 1500 cattle for ship provision; and the people of Smaland received Christianity. After this King Sigurd turned about with his fleet, and came back to his kingdom with many valuable articles and great booty, which he had gathered on this expedition; and this levy was called the Calmar levy. This was the summer before the eclipse. This was the only levy King Sigurd carried out as long as he was king.

29. OF THORARIN STUTFELD.

It happened once when King Sigurd was going from the drinking-table to vespers, that his men were very drunk and merry; and many of them sat outside the church singing the evening song, but their singing was very irregular. Then the king said, "Who is that fellow I see standing at the church with a skin jacket on?" They answered, that they did not know. Then the king said:—

This skin-clad man, in sorry plight,
Puts all our wisdom here to flight.

Then the fellow came forward and said:—

I thought that here I might be known,
Although my dress is scanty grown.
'Tis poor, but I must be content:
Unless, great king, it's thy intent
To give me better; for I have seen
When I and rags had strangers been.

The king answered, "Come to me to-morrow when I am at the drink-table." The night passed away; and the morning after the Icelander, who was afterwards called Thorarin Stutfeld, went into the drinking-room. A man stood outside of the door of the room with a horn in his hand, and said, "Icelander! the king says that if thou wilt deserve any gift from him thou shalt compose a song before going in, and make it about a man whose name is Hakon Serkson, and who is called Morstrut; and speak about that surname in thy song." The man who spoke to him was called Arne Fioruskeif. Then they went into the room; and when Thorarin came before the king's seat he recited these verses:—

Throndhjem's warrior-king has said
The skald should be by gifts repaid,
If he before this meeting gave
The king's friend Serk a passing stave.
The generous king has let me know
My stave, to please, must be framed so
That my poor verse extol the fame
Of one called Hakon Lump by name.

Then said the king, "I never said so, and somebody has been making a mock of thee. Hakon himself shall determine what punishment thou shalt have. Go into his suite." Hakon said, "He shall be welcome among us, for I can see where the joke came from;" and he placed the Icelander at his side next to himself, and they were very merry. The day was drawing to a close, and the liquor began to get into their heads, when Hakon said, "Dost thou not think, Icelander, that thou owest me some penalty? and dost thou not see that some trick has been played upon thee?"

Thorarin replies, "It is true, indeed, that I owe thee some compensation."

Hakon says, "Then we shall be quits, if thou wilt make me another stave about Arne."

He said he was ready to do so; and they crossed over to the side of the room where Arne was sitting, and Thorarin gave these verses:—

Fíoruskeif has often spread,
With evil heart and idle head,
The eagle's voidings round the land,
Lampoons and lies, with ready hand.
Yet this landlouver we all know,
In Africa scarce fed a crow,
Of all his arms used in the field,
Those in most use were helm and shield.

Arne sprang up instantly, drew his sword, and was going to fall upon him; but Hakon told him to let it alone and be quiet, and bade him remember that if it came to a quarrel he would come off the worst himself. Thorarin afterwards went up to the king, and said he had composed a poem which he wished the king to hear. The king consented, and the song is known by the name of the Stutfeld poem. The king asked Thorarin what he intended to do. He replied, it was his intention to go to Rome. Then the king gave him much money for his pilgrimage, and told him to visit him on his return, and promised to provide for him.

30. OF SIGURD AND OTTAR BIRTING.

It is told that King Sigurd, one Whitsunday, sat at table with many people, among whom were many of his friends; and when he came to his high-seat, people saw that his countenance was very wild, and as if he had been weeping, so that people were afraid of what might follow. The king rolled his eyes, and looked at those who were seated on the benches. Then he seized the holy book which he had brought with him from abroad, and which was written all over with gilded letters; so that never had such a costly book come to Norway. His queen sat by his side. Then said King Sigurd, "Many are the changes which may take place during a man's lifetime. I had two things which were dear to me above all when I came from abroad, and these were this book and the queen; and now I think the one is only worse and more loathsome than the other, and nothing I have belonging to me that I more detest. The queen does not know herself how hideous she is; for a goat's horn is standing out on her head, and the better I liked her before the worse I like her now." Thereupon he cast the book on the fire which was burning on the hall-floor, and gave the queen a blow with his fist between the eyes. The queen wept; but more at the king's illness than at the blow, or the affront she had suffered.

Then a man stood up before the king; his name was Ottar Birting; and he was one of the torch-bearers, although a bonde's son, and was on service that day. He was of small stature, but of agreeable appearance; lively, bold, and full of fun; black haired, and of a dark skin. He ran and snatched the book which the king had cast into the fire, held it out, and said, "Different were the days, sire, when you came with great state and splendour to Norway, and with great fame and honour; for then all your friends came to meet you with joy, and were glad at your coming. All as one man would have you for king, and have you in the highest regard and honour. But now days of sorrow are come over us; for on this holy festival many of your friends have come to you, and cannot be cheerful on account of your melancholy and ill health. It is much to be desired that you would be merry with them; and do, good king, take this saving advice, make peace first with the queen, and make her joyful whom you have so highly affronted, with a friendly word; and then all your chiefs, friends, and servants; that is my advice."

Then said King Sigurd, "Dost thou dare to give me advice, thou great lump of a houseman's lad!" And he sprang up, drew his sword, and swung it with both hands as if going to cut him down.

But Ottar stood quiet and upright; did not stir from the spot, nor show the slightest sign of fear; and the king turned round the sword-blade which he had waved over Ottar's head, and gently touched him on the shoulder with it. Then he sat down in silence on his high-seat.

All were silent who were in the hall, for nobody dared to say a word. Now the king looked around him, milder than before, and said, "It is difficult to know what there is in people. Here sat my friends, and lendersmen, marshals and shield-bearers, and all

the best men in the land; but none did so well against me as this man, who appears to you of little worth compared to any of you, although now he loves me most. I came here like a madman, and would have destroyed my precious property; but he turned aside my deed, and was not afraid of death for it. Then he made an able speech, ordering his words so that they were honourable to me, and not saying a single word about things which could increase my vexation; but even avoiding what might, with truth, have been said. So excellent was his speech, that no man here, however great his understanding, could have spoken better. Then I sprang up in a pretended rage, and made as if I would have cut him down; but he was courageous as if he had nothing to fear; and seeing that, I let go my purpose; for he was altogether innocent. Now ye shall know, my friends, how I intend to reward him; he was before my torchbearer, and shall now be my lenderman; and there shall follow what is still more, that he shall be the most distinguished of my lendersmen. Go thou and sit among the lendersmen, and be a servant no longer."

Ottar became one of the most celebrated men in Norway for various good and praiseworthy deeds.

31. OF KING SIGURD'S DREAM.

In King Sigurd's latter days he was once at an entertainment at one of his farms; and in the morning when he was dressed he was silent and still, so that his friends were afraid he was not able to govern himself. Now the farm bailiff, who was a man of good sense and courage, brought him into conversation, and asked if he had heard any news of such importance that it disturbed his mirth; or if the entertainment had not satisfied him; or if there was anything else that people could remedy.

King Sigurd said, that none of the things he had mentioned was the cause. "But it is that I think upon the dream I had in the night."

"Sire," replied he, "may it prove a lucky dream! I would gladly hear it."

The king: "I thought that I was in Jadar, and looked out towards the sea; and that I saw something very black moving itself; and when it came near it appeared to be a large tree, of which the branches stretched far above the water, and the roots were down in the sea. Now when the tree came to the shore it broke into pieces, and drove all about the land, both the mainland and the out-islands, rocks and strands; and it appeared to me as if I saw over all Norway along the sea-coast, and saw pieces of that tree, some small and some large, driven into every bight."

Then said the bailiff, "It is likely that you can best interpret this dream yourself; and I would willingly hear your interpretation of it."

Then said the king, "This dream appears to me to denote the arrival in this country of some man who will fix his seat here, and whose posterity will spread itself over the land; but with unequal power, as the dream shows."

32. OF ASLAK HANE.

It so happened once, that King Sigurd sat in a gloomy mood among many worthy men. It was Friday evening, and the kitchen-master asked what meat should be made ready.

The king replies, "What else but flesh-meat?" And so harsh were his words that nobody dared to contradict him, and all were ill at ease. Now when people prepared to go to table, dishes of warm flesh-meat were carried in; but all were silent, and grieved at the king's illness. Before the blessing was pronounced over the meat, a man called Aslak Hane spoke. He had been a long time with King Sigurd on his journey abroad, and was not a man of any great family; and was small of stature, but fiery. When he perceived how it was, and that none dared to accost the king, he asked, "What is it, sire, that is smoking on the dish before you?"

The king replies, "What do you mean, Aslak? what do you think it is?"

Aslak: "I think it is flesh-meat; and I would it were not so."

The king: "But if it be so, Aslak?"

He replied, "It would be vexatious to know that a gallant king, who has gained so much honour in the world, should so forget himself. When you rose up out of Jordan, after bathing in the

same waters as God himself, with palm-leaves in your hands, and the cross upon your breast, it was something else you promised, sire, than to eat flesh-meat on a Friday. If a meaner man were to do so, he would merit a heavy punishment. This royal hall is not so beset as it should be, when it falls upon me, a mean man, to challenge such an act."

The king sat silent, and did not partake of the meat; and when the time for eating was drawing to an end, the king ordered the flesh dishes to be removed and other food was brought in, such as it is permitted to use. When the meal-time was almost past, the king began to be cheerful, and to drink. People advised Aslak to fly, but he said he would not do so. "I do not see how it could help me; and to tell the truth, it is as good to die now that I have got my will, and have prevented the king from committing a sin. It is for him to kill me if he likes."

Towards evening the king called him, and said, "Who set thee on, Aslak Hane, to speak such free words to me in the hearing of so many people?"

"No one, sire, but myself."

The king: "Thou wouldst like, no doubt, to know what thou art to have for such boldness; what thinkest thou it deserves."

He replies, "If it be well rewarded, sire, I shall be glad; but should it be otherwise, then it is your concern."

Then the king said, "Smaller is thy reward than thou hast deserved. I give thee three farms. It has turned out, what could not have been expected, that thou hast prevented me from a great crime,—thou, and not the lenders, who are indebted to me for so much good." And so it ended.

33. OF A WOMAN BROUGHT TO THE KING.

One Yule eve the king sat in the hall, and the tables were laid out, and the king said, "Get me flesh-meat."

They answered, "Sire, it is not the custom to eat flesh-meat on Yule eve."

The king said, "If it be not the custom I will make it the custom."

They went out, and brought him a dolphin. The king stuck his knife into it, but did not eat of it. Then the king said, "Bring me a girl here into the hall." They brought him a woman whose head-dress went far down her brows. The king took her hand in his hands, looked at her, and said, "An ill looking girl!"

(LACUNA—The rest of this story is missing)

34. HARALD GILLE COMES TO NORWAY.

Halkel Huk, a son of Jon Smiorbalte, who was lenderman in More, made a voyage in the West sea, all the way to the South Hebudes. A man came to him out of Ireland called Gillikrist, and gave himself out for a son of King Magnus Barefoot. His mother came with him, and said his other name was Harald. Halkel received the man, brought him to Norway with him, and went immediately to King Sigurd with Harald and his mother. When they had told their story to the king, he talked over the matter with his principal men, and bade them give their opinions upon it. They were of different opinions, and all left it to the king himself, although there were several who opposed this; and the king followed his own counsel. King Sigurd ordered Harald to be called before him, and told him that he would not deny him the proof, by ordeal, of who his father was; but on condition that if he should prove his descent according to his claim, he should not desire the kingdom in the lifetime of King Sigurd, or of King Magnus: and to this he bound himself by oath. King Sigurd said he must tread over hot iron to prove his birth; but this ordeal was thought by many too severe, as he was to undergo it merely to prove his father, and without getting the kingdom; but Harald agreed to it, and fixed on the trial by iron: and this ordeal was the greatest ever made in Norway; for nine glowing plowshares were laid down, and Harald went over them with bare feet, attended by two bishops.

Three days after the iron trial the ordeal was taken to proof, and the feet were found unburnt. Thereafter King Sigurd acknowledged Harald's relationship; but his son Magnus conceived a great hatred of him, and in this many chiefs followed Magnus. King Sigurd trusted so much to his favour with the whole people of the

country, that he desired all men, under oath, to promise to accept Magnus after him as their king; and all the people took this oath.

35. RACE BETWEEN MAGNUS AND HARALD GILLE.

Harald Gille was a tall, slender-grown man, of a long neck and face, black eyes, and dark hair, brisk and quick, and wore generally the Irish dress of short light clothes. The Norse language was difficult for Harald, and he brought out words which many laughed at. Harald sat late drinking one evening. He spoke with another man about different things in the west in Ireland; and among other things, said that there were men in Ireland so swift of foot that no horse could overtake them in running. Magnus, the king's son, heard this, and said, "Now he is lying, as he usually does."

Harald replies, "It is true that there are men in Ireland whom no horse in Norway could overtake." They exchanged some words about this, and both were drunk. Then said Magnus, "Thou shalt make a wager with me, and stake thy head if thou canst not run so fast as I ride upon my horse, and I shall stake my gold ring."

Harald replies, "I did not say that I could run so swiftly; but I said that men are to be found in Ireland who will run as fast; and on that I would wager."

The king's son Magnus replies, "I will not go to Ireland about it; we are wagering here, and not there."

Harald on this went to bed, and would not speak to him more about it. This was in Oslo. The following morning, when the early mass was over, Magnus rode up the street, and sent a message to Harald to come to him. When Harald came he was dressed thus. He had on a shirt and trousers which were bound with ribands under his foot-soles, a short cloak, an Irish hat on his head, and a spear-shaft in his hand. Magnus set up a mark for the race. Harald said, "Thou hast made the course too long;" but Magnus made it at once even much longer, and said it was still too short. There were many spectators. They began the race, and Harald followed always the horse's pace; and when they came to the end of the race course, Magnus said, "Thou hadst hold of the saddle-girth, and the horse dragged thee along." Magnus had his swift runner, the Gautland horse. They began the race again, and Harald ran the whole race-course before the horse. When came to the end Harald asked, "Had I hold of the saddle-girths now?"

Magnus replied, "Thou hadst the start at first."

Then Magnus let his horse breathe a while, and when he was ready he put the spurs to him, and set off in full gallop. Harald stood still, and Magnus looked back, and called, "Set off now."

Then Harald ran quickly past the horse, and came to the end of the course so long before him that he lay down, and got up and saluted Magnus as he came in.

Then they went home to the town. In the meantime King Sigurd had been at high mass, and knew nothing of this until after he had dined that day. Then he said to Magnus angrily, "Thou callest Harald useless; but I think thou art a great fool, and knowest nothing of the customs of foreign people. Dost thou not know that men in other countries exercise themselves in other feats than in filling themselves with ale, and making themselves mad, and so unfit for everything that they scarcely know each other? Give Harald his ring, and do not try to make a fool of him again, as long as I am above ground."

36. OF SIGURD'S SWIMMING.

It happened once that Sigurd was out in his ship, which lay in the harbour; and there lay a merchant ship, which was an Iceland trader, at the side of it. Harald Gille was in the fore-castle of the king's ship, and Svein Rimhildson, a son of Knut Sveinsson of Jadar, had his berth the next before him. There was also Sigurd Sigurdson, a gallant lenderman, who himself commanded a ship. It was a day of beautiful weather and warm sunshine, and many went out to swim, both from the long-ship and the merchant vessel. An Iceland man, who was among the swimmers, amused himself by drawing those under water who could not swim so well as himself; and at that the spectators laughed. When King Sigurd saw and heard this, he cast off his clothes, sprang into the water, and swam to the Icelandic, seized him, and pressed him under the

water, and held him there; and as soon as the Iclander came up the king pressed him down again, and thus the one time after the other.

Then said Sigurd Sigurdson, "Shall we let the king kill this man?"

Somebody said, "No one has any wish to interfere."

Sigurd replies, that "If Dag Eilifson were here, we should not be without one who dared."

Then Sigurd sprang overboard, swam to the king, took hold of him, and said, "Sire, do not kill the man. Everybody sees that you are a much better swimmer."

The king replies, "Let me loose, Sigurd: I shall be his death, for he will destroy our people under water."

Sigurd says, "Let us first amuse ourselves; and, Iclander, do thou set off to the land," which he did. The king now got loose from Sigurd, and swam to his ship, and Sigurd went his way: but the king ordered that Sigurd should not presume to come into his presence; this was reported to Sigurd, and so he went up into the country.

37. OF HARALD AND SVEIN RIMHILDSON.

In the evening, when people were going to bed, some of the ship's men were still at their games up in the country. Harald was with those who played on the land, and told his footboy to go out to the ship, make his bed, and wait for him there. The lad did as he was ordered. The king had gone to sleep; and as the boy thought Harald late, he laid himself in Harald's berth. Svein Rimhildson said, "It is a shame for brave men to be brought from their farms at home, and to have here serving boys to sleep beside them." The lad said that Harald had ordered him to come there. Svein Rimhildson said, "We do not so much care for Harald himself lying here, if he do not bring here his slaves and beggars;" and seized a riding-whip, and struck the boy on the head until the blood flowed from him. The boy ran immediately up the country, and told Harald what had happened, who went immediately out to the ship, to the aft part of the fore-castle, and with a pole-axe struck Svein so that he received a severe wound on his hands; and then Harald went on shore. Svein ran to the land after him, and, gathering his friends, took Harald prisoner, and they were about hanging him. But while they were busy about this, Sigurd Sigurdson went out to the king's ship and awoke him. When the king opened his eyes and recognised Sigurd, he said, "For this reason thou shalt die, that thou hast intruded into my presence; for thou knowest that I forbade thee:" and with these words the king sprang up.

Sigurd replied, "That is in your power as soon as you please; but other business is more urgent. Go to the land as quickly as possible to help thy brother; for the Rogaland people are going to hang him."

Then said the king, "God give us luck, Sigurd! Call my trumpeter, and let him call the people all to land, and to meet me."

The king sprang on the land, and all who knew him followed him to where the gallows was being erected. The king instantly took Harald to him; and all the people gathered to the king in full armour, as they heard the trumpet. Then the king ordered that Svein and all his comrades should depart from the country as outlaws; but by the intercession of good men the king was prevailed on to let them remain and hold their properties, but no mulct should be paid for Svein's wound.

Then Sigurd Sigurdson asked if the king wished that he should go forth out of the country.

"That will I not," said the king; "for I can never be without thee."

38. OF KING OLAF'S MIRACLE.

There was a young and poor man called Kolbein; and Thora, King Sigurd the Crusader's mother, had ordered his tongue to be cut out of his mouth, and for no other cause than that this young man had taken a piece of meat out of the king-mother's tub which he said the cook had given him, and which the cook had not ventured to serve up to her. The man had long gone about speechless. So says Einar Skulason in Olaf's ballad:—

The proud rich dame, for little cause,
Had the lad's tongue cut from his jaws:
The helpless man, of speech deprived,

His dreadful sore wound scarce survived.

A few weeks since at Hild was seen,

As well as ever he had been,

The same poor lad—to speech restored

By Olaf's power, whom he adored.

Afterwards the young man came to Nidaros, and watched in the Christ church; but at the second mass for Olaf before matins he fell asleep, and thought he saw King Olaf the Saint coming to him; and that Olaf talked to him, and took hold with his hands of the stump of his tongue and pulled it. Now when he awoke he found himself restored, and joyfully did he thank our Lord and the holy Saint Olaf, who had pitied and helped him; for he had come there speechless, and had gone to the holy shrine, and went away cured, and with his speech clear and distinct.

39. KING OLAF'S MIRACLE WITH A PRISONER.

The heathens took prisoner a young man of Danish family and carried him to Vindland, where he was in fetters along with other prisoners. In the day-time he was alone in irons, without a guard; but at night a peasant's son was beside him in the chain, that he might not escape from them. This poor man never got sleep or rest from vexation and sorrow, and considered in many ways what could help him; for he had a great dread of slavery, and was pining with hunger and torture. He could not again expect to be ransomed by his friends, as they had already restored him twice from heathen lands with their own money; and he well knew that it would be difficult and expensive for them to submit a third time to this burden. It is well with the man who does not undergo so much in the world as this man knew he had suffered. He saw but one way; and that was to get off and escape if he could. He resolved upon this in the night-time, killed the peasant, and cut his foot off after killing him, and set off to the forest with the chain upon his leg. Now when the people knew this, soon after daylight in the morning, they pursued him with two dogs accustomed to trace any one who escaped, and to find him in the forest however carefully he might be concealed. They got him into their hands and beat him, and did him all kinds of mischief; and dragging him home, left barely alive, and showed him no mercy. They tortured him severely; put him in a dark room, in which there lay already sixteen Christian men; and bound him both with iron and other tyings, as fast as they could. Then he began to think that the misery and pain he had endured before were but shadows to his present sufferings. He saw no man before his eyes in this prison who would beg for mercy for him; no one had compassion on his wretchedness, except the Christian men who lay bound with him, who sorrowed with him, and bemoaned his fate together with their own misfortunes and helplessness. One day they advised him to make a vow to the holy King Olaf, to devote himself to some office in his sacred house, if he, by God's compassion and Saint Olaf's prayers could get away from this prison. He gladly agreed to this, and made a vow and prepared himself for the situation they mentioned to him. The night after he thought in his sleep that he saw a man, not tall, standing at his side, who spoke to him thus, "Here, thou wretched man, why dost thou not get up?"

He replied, "Sir, who are you?"

"I am King Olaf, on whom thou hast called."

"Oh, my good lord! gladly would I raise myself; but I lie bound with iron and with chains on my legs, and also the other men who lie here."

Thereupon the king accosts him with the words, "Stand up at once and be not afraid; for thou art loose."

He awoke immediately, and told his comrades what, had appeared to him in his dream. They told him to stand up, and try if it was true. He stood up, and observed that he was loose. Now said his fellow-prisoners, this would help him but little, for the door was locked both on the inside and on the outside. Then an old man who sat there in a deplorable condition put in his word, and told him not to doubt the mercy of the man who had loosened his chains; "For he has wrought this miracle on thee that thou shouldst enjoy his mercy, and hereafter be free, without suf-

fering more misery and torture. Make haste, then, and seek the door; and if thou are able to slip out, thou art saved."

He did so, found the door open, slipped out, and away to the forest. As soon as the Vindland people were aware of this they set loose the dogs, and pursued him in great haste; and the poor man lay hid, and saw well where they were following him. But now the hounds lost the trace when they came nearer, and all the eyes that sought him were struck with a blindness, so that nobody could find him, although he lay before their feet; and they all returned home, vexed that they could not find him. King Olaf did not permit this man's destruction after he had reached the forest, and restored him also to his health and hearing; for they had so long tortured and beaten him that he had become deaf. At last he came on board of a ship, with two other Christian men who had been long afflicted in that country. All of them worked zealously in this vessel, and so had a successful flight. Then he repaired to the holy man's house, strong and fit to bear arms. Now he was vexed at his vow, went from his promise to the holy king, ran away one day, and came in the evening to a bonde who gave him lodging for God's sake. Then in the night he saw three girls coming to him; and handsome and nobly dressed were they. They spoke to him directly, and sharply reprimanded him for having been so bold as to run from the good king who had shown so much compassion to him, first in freeing him from his irons, and then from the prison; and yet he had deserted the mild master into whose service he had entered. Then he awoke full of terror, got up early, and told the house-father his dream. The good man had nothing so earnest in life as to send him-back to the holy place. This miracle was first written down by a man who himself saw the man, and the marks of the chains upon his body.

40. KING SIGURD MARRIES CECILIA.

In the last period of King Sigurd's life, his new and extraordinary resolution was whispered about, that he would be divorced from his queen, and would take Cecilia, who was a great man's daughter, to wife. He ordered accordingly a great feast to be prepared, and intended to hold his wedding with her in Bergen. Now when Bishop Magne heard this, he was very sorry; and one day the bishop goes to the king's hall, and with him a priest called Sigurd, who was afterwards bishop of Bergen. When they came to the king's hall, the bishop sent the king a message that he would like to meet him; and asked the king to come out to him. He did so, and came out with a drawn sword in his hand. He received the bishop kindly and asked him to go in and sit down to table with him.

The bishop replies, "I have other business now. Is it true, sire, what is told me, that thou hast the intention of marrying, and of driving away thy queen, and taking another wife?"

The king said it was true.

Then the bishop changed countenance, and angrily replied, "How can it come into your mind, sire, to do such an act in our bishopric as to betray God's word and law, and the holy church? It surprises me that you treat with such contempt our episcopal office, and your own royal office. I will now do what is my duty; and in the name of God, of the holy King Olaf, of Peter the apostle, and of the other saints, forbid thee this wickedness."

While he thus spoke he stood straight up, as if stretching out his neck to the blow, as if ready if the king chose to let the sword fall; and the priest Sigurd, who afterwards was bishop, has declared that the sky appeared to him no bigger than a calf's skin, so frightful did the appearance of the king present itself to him. The king returned to the hall, however, without saying a word; and the bishop went to his house and home so cheerful and gay that he laughed, and saluted every child on his way, and was playing with his fingers. Then the priest Sigurd asked him the reason, saying, "Why are you so cheerful, sir? Do you not consider that the king may be exasperated against you? and would it not be better to get out of the way?"

Then said the bishop, "It appears to me more likely that he will not act so; and besides, what death could be better, or more desirable, than to leave life for the honour of God? or to die for the holy cause of Christianity and our own office, by preventing that

which is not right? I am so cheerful because I have done what I ought to do."

There was much noise in the town about this. The king got ready for a journey, and took with him corn, malt and honey. He went south to Stavanger, and prepared a feast there for his marriage with Cecilia. When a bishop who ruled there heard of this he went to the king, and asked if it were true that he intended to marry in the lifetime of the queen.

The king said it was so.

The bishop answers, "If it be so, sire, you must know how much such a thing is forbidden to inferior persons. Now it appears as if you thought it was allowable for you, because you have great power, and that it is proper for you, although it is against right and propriety; but I do not know how you will do it in our bishopric, dishonouring thereby God's command, the holy Church, and our episcopal authority. But you must bestow a great amount of gifts and estates on this foundation, and thereby pay the mulct due to God and to us for such transgression."

Then said the king, "Take what thou wilt of our possessions. Thou art far more reasonable than Bishop Magne."

Then the king went away, as well pleased with this bishop as ill pleased with him who had laid a prohibition on him. Thereafter the king married the girl, and loved her tenderly.

41. IMPROVEMENT OF KONUNGAHELLA.

King Sigurd improved the town of Konungahella so much, that there was not a greater town in Norway at the time, and he remained there long for the defence of the frontiers. He built a king's house in the castle, and imposed a duty on all the districts in the neighbourhood of the town, as well as on the townspeople, that every person of nine years of age and upwards should bring to the castle five missile stones for weapons, or as many large stakes sharp at one end and five ells long. In the castle the king built a cross-church of timber, and carefully put together, as far as regards the wood and other materials. The cross-church was consecrated in the 24th year of King Sigurd's reign (A.D. 1127). Here the king deposited the piece of the holy cross, and many other holy relics. It was called the castle church; and before the high altar he placed the tables he had got made in the Greek country, which were of copper and silver, all gilt, and beautifully adorned with jewels. Here was also the shrine which the Danish king Eirik Eimune had sent to King Sigurd; and the altar book, written with gold letters, which the patriarch had presented to King Sigurd.

42. KING SIGURD'S DEATH.

Three years after the consecration of the cross-church, when King Sigurd was stopping at Viken, he fell sick (A.D. 1130). He died the night before Mary's-mass (August 15), and was buried in Halvard's church, where he was laid in the stone wall without the choir on the south side. His son Magnus was in the town at the time and took possession of the whole of the king's treasury when King Sigurd died. Sigurd had been king of Norway twenty-seven years (A.D. 1104-1130), and was forty years of age when he died. The time of his reign was good for the country; for there was peace, and crops were good.

SAGA OF MAGNUS THE BLIND AND OF HARALD GILLE.

1. MAGNUS AND HARALD PROCLAIMED KINGS.

King Sigurd's son Magnus was proclaimed in Oslo king of all the country immediately after his father's death, according to the oath which the whole nation had sworn to King Sigurd; and many went into his service, and many became his lendenmen. Magnus was the handsomest man then in Norway; of a passionate temper, and cruel, but distinguished in bodily exercises. The favour of the people he owed most to the respect for his father. He was a great drinker, greedy of money, hard, and obstinate.

Harald Gille, on the other hand, was very pleasing in intercourse, gay, and full of mirth; and so generous that he spared in

nothing for the sake of his friends. He willingly listened to good advice, so that he allowed others to consult with him and give counsel. With all this he obtained favour and a good repute, and many men attached themselves as much to him as to King Magnus. Harald was in Tunsberg when he heard of his brother King Sigurd's death. He called together his friends to a meeting, and it was resolved to hold the Hauga Thing there in the town. At this Thing, Harald was chosen king of half the country, and it was called a forced oath which had been taken from him to renounce his paternal heritage. Then Harald formed a court, and appointed lendenmen; and very soon he had as many people about him as King Magnus. Then men went between them, and matters stood in this way for seven days; but King Magnus, finding he had fewer people, was obliged to give way, and to divide the kingdom with Harald into two parts. The kingdom accordingly was so divided (October 3, 1130) that each of them should have the half part of the kingdom which King Sigurd had possessed; but that King Magnus alone should inherit the fleet of ships, the table service, the valuable articles and the movable effects which had belonged to his father, King Sigurd. He was notwithstanding the least satisfied with his share. Although they were of such different dispositions, they ruled the country for some time in peace. King Harald had a son called Sigurd, by Thora, a daughter of Guthorm Grabarde. King Harald afterwards married Ingerid, a daughter of Ragnvald, who was a son of the Swedish King Inge Steinkelson. King Magnus was married to a daughter of Knut Lavard, and she was a sister of the Danish King Valdemar; but King Magnus having no affection for her, sent her back to Denmark; and from that day everything went ill with him, and he brought upon himself the enmity of her family.

2. OF THE FORCES OF HARALD AND MAGNUS.

When the two relations, Harald and Magnus, had been about three years kings of Norway (A.D. 1131-1133), they both passed the fourth winter (A.D. 1134) in the town of Nidaros, and invited each other as guests; but their people were always ready for a fight. In spring King Magnus sailed southwards along the land with his fleet, and drew all the men he could obtain out of each district, and sounded his friends if they would strengthen him with their power to take the kingly dignity from Harald, and give him such a portion of the kingdom, as might be suitable; representing to them that King Harald had already renounced the kingdom by oath. King Magnus obtained the consent of many powerful men. The same spring Harald went to the Uplands, and by the upper roads eastwards to Viken; and when he heard what King Magnus was doing, he also drew together men on his side. Wheresoever the two parties went they killed the cattle, or even the people, upon the farms of the adverse party. King Magnus had by far the most people, for the main strength of the country lay open to him for collecting men from it. King Harald was in Viken on the east side of the fjord, and collected men, while they were doing each other damage in property and life. King Harald had with him Kristrod, his brother by his mother's side, and many other lendenmen; but King Magnus had many more. King Harald was with his forces at a place called Fors in Ranrike, and went from thence towards the sea. The evening before Saint Lawrence day (August 10), they had their supper at a place called Fyrileaf, while the guard kept a watch on horseback all around the house. The watchmen observed King Magnus's army hastening towards the house, and consisting of full 6000 men, while King Harald had but 1500. Now come the watchmen who had to bring the news to King Harald of what was going on and say that King Magnus's army was now very near the town.

The king says, "What will my relation King Magnus Sigurdson have? He wants not surely to fight us."

Thjostolf Alason replies, "You must certainly, sire, make preparation for that, both for yourself and your men. King Magnus has been drawing together an army all the summer for the purpose of giving you battle when he meets you."

Then King Harald stood up, and ordered his men to take their arms. "We shall fight, if our relative King Magnus wants to fight

us."

Then the war-horns sounded, and all Harald's men went out from the house to an enclosed field, and set up their banners. King Harald had on two shirts of ring-mail, but his brother Kristrod had no armour on; and a gallant man he was. When King Magnus and his men saw King Harald's troop they drew up and made their array, and made their line so long that they could surround the whole of King Harald's troop. So says Haldor Skvaldre:—

King Magnus on the battle-plain
From his long troop-line had great gain;
The plain was drenched with warm blood,
Which lay a red and reeking flood.

3. BATTLE AT FYRILEIF.

King Magnus had the holy cross carried before him in this battle, and the battle was great and severe. The king's brother, Kristrod, had penetrated with his troop into the middle of King Magnus's array, and cut down on each side of him, so that people gave way before him everywhere. But a powerful bonde who was in King Harald's array raised his spear with both hands, and drove it through between Kristrod's shoulders, so that it came out at his breast; and thus fell Kristrod. Many who were near asked the bonde why he had done so foul a deed.

The bonde replies, "He knows the consequences now of slaughtering my cattle in summer, and taking all that was in my house, and forcing me to follow him here. I determined to give him some return when the opportunity came."

After this King Harald's army took to flight, and he fled himself, with all his men. Many fell; and Ingemar Sveinson of Ask, a great chief and lenderman, got there his death-wound, and nearly sixty of King Harald's court-men also fell. Harald himself fled eastward to Viken to his ships, and went out of the country to King Eirik Eimune in Denmark, and found him in Seeland and sought aid from him. King Eirik received him well, and principally because they had sworn to each other to be as brothers; and gave him Halland as a fief to rule over, and gave him seven long-ships, but without equipment. Thereafter King Harald went northwards through Halland, and many Northmen came to meet him. After this battle King Magnus subdued the whole country, giving life and safety to all who were wounded, and had them taken care of equally with his own men. He then called the whole country his own, and had a choice of the best men who were in the country. When they held a council among themselves afterwards, Sigurd Sigurdson, Thoror Ingeridson, and all the men of most understanding, advised that they should keep their forces together in Viken, and remain there, in case Harald should return from the south; but King Magnus would take his own way, and went north to Bergen. There he sat all winter (A.D. 1135), and allowed his men to leave him; on which the lendenmen returned home to their own houses.

4. DEATH OF ASBJORN AND OF NEREID.

King Harald came to Konungahella with the men who had followed him from Denmark. The lendenmen and town's burgesses collected a force against him, which they drew up in a thick array above the town. King Harald landed from his ships, and sent a message to the bondes, desiring that they would not deny him his land, as he wanted no more than what of right belonged to him. Then mediators went between them; and it came to this, that the bondes dismissed their troops, and submitted to him. Thereupon he bestowed fiefs and property on the lendenmen, that they might stand by him, and paid the bondes who joined him the lawful mulcts for what they had lost. A great body of men attached themselves, therefore, to King Harald; and he proceeded westwards to Viken, where he gave peace to all men, except to King Magnus's people, whom he plundered and killed wherever he found them. And when he came west to Sarpsborg he took prisoners two of King Magnus's lendenmen, Asbjorn and his brother Nereid; and gave them the choice that one should be hanged, and the other thrown into the Sarpsborg waterfall, and they might choose as they pleased. Asbjorn chose to be thrown into the cataract, for he was the elder of the two, and this death appeared the most dreadful; and so it was done. Halder Skvaldre tells of this:—

Asbjorn, who opposed the king,
 O'er the wild cataract they fling:
 Nereid, who opposed the king,
 Must on Hagbard's high tree swing.
 The king given food in many a way
 To foul-mouthed beasts and birds of prey:
 The generous men who dare oppose
 Are treated as the worst of foes.

Thereafter King Harald proceeded north to Tunsberg, where he was well received, and a large force gathered to him.

5. OF THE COUNSELS PROPOSED.

When King Magnus, who was in Bergen, heard these tidings, he called together all the chiefs who were in the town, and asked them their counsel, and what they should now do. Then Sigurd Sigurdson said, "Here I can give a good advice. Let a ship be manned with good men, and put me, or any other lenderman, to command it; send it to thy relation, King Harald, and offer him peace according to the conditions upright men may determine upon, and offer him the half of the kingdom. It appears to me probable that King Harald, by the words and counsel of good men, may accept this offer, and thus there may be a peace established between you."

Then King Magnus replied, "This proposal I will not accept of; for of what advantage would it be, after we have gained the whole kingdom in summer to give away the half of it now? Give us some other counsel."

Then Sigurd Sigurdson answered, "It appears to me, sire, that your lendermen who in autumn asked your leave to return home will now sit at home and will not come to you. At that time it was much against my advice that you dispersed so entirely the people we had collected; for I could well suppose that Harald would come back to Viken as soon as he heard that it was without a chief. Now there is still another counsel, and it is but a poor one; but it may turn out useful to us. Send out your pursuivants, and send other people with them, and let them go against the lendermen who will not join you in your necessity, and kill them; and bestow their property on others who will give you help although they may have been of small importance before. Let them drive together the people, the bad as well as the good; and go with the men you can thus assemble against King Harald, and give him battle."

The king replies, "It would be unpopular to put to death people of distinction, and raise up inferior people who often break faith and law, and the country would be still worse off. I would like to hear some other counsel still."

Sigurd replies, "It is difficult for me now to give advice, as you will neither make peace nor give battle. Let us go north to Throndhjem, where the main strength of the country is most inclined to our side; and on the way let us gather all the men we can. It may be that these Elfgims will be tired of such a long stride after us."

The king replies, "We must not fly from those whom we beat in summer. Give some better counsel still."

Then Sigurd stood up and said, while he was preparing to go out, "I will now give you the counsel which I see you will take, and which must have its course. Sit here in Bergen until Harald comes with his troops, and then you will either suffer death or disgrace."

And Sigurd remained no longer at that meeting.

6. OF HARALD'S FORCE.

King Harald came from the East along the coast with a great army, and this winter (A.D. 1135) is called on that account the Crowd-winter. King Harald came to Bergen on Christmas eve, and landed with his fleet at Floruvagar; but would not fight on account of the sacred time. But King Magnus prepared for defence in the town. He erected a stone-slinging machine out on the holm, and had iron chains and wooden booms laid across over the passage from the king's house to Nordnes, and to the Monks bridge. He had foot-traps made, and thrown into Saint John's field, and did not suspend these works except during the three sacred days of Christmas. The last holyday of Yule, King Harald ordered his war-horns to sound the gathering of his men for going to the town; and, during the Yule holydays, his army had been increased by about 900 men.

7. KING MAGNUS TAKEN PRISONER.

King Harald made a promise to King Olaf the Saint for victory, that he would build an Olaf's church in the town at his own expense. King Magnus drew up his men in the Christ church yard; but King Harald laid his vessels first at Nordnes. Now when King Magnus and his people saw that, they turned round towards the town, and to the end of the shore; but as they passed through the streets many of the burgesses ran into their houses and homes, and those who went across the fields fell into the foot-traps. Then King Magnus and his men perceived that King Harald had rowed with all his men across to Hegravik, and landed there, and had gone from thence the upper road up the hill opposite the town. Now Magnus returned back again through the streets, and then his men fled from him in all directions; some up to the mountains, some up to the neighbourhood of the convent of nuns, some to churches, or hid themselves as they best could. King Magnus fled to his ship; but there was no possibility of getting away, for the iron chains outside prevented the passage of vessels. He had also but few men with him, and therefore could do nothing. Einar Skulason tells of this in the song of Harald:—

For a whole week an iron chain
 Cut off all sailing to the main:
 Bergen's blue stable was locked fast,—
 Her floating wains could not get past.

Soon after Harald's people came out to the ships, and then King Magnus was made prisoner. He was sitting behind in the forecastle upon the chests of the high-seat, and at his side Hakon Fauk, his mother's brother, who was very popular but was not considered very wise, and Ivar Assurson. They, and many others of King Magnus's friends, were taken, and some of them killed on the spot.

8. KING MAGNUS MUTILATED.

Thereafter King Harald had a meeting of his counsellors, and desired their counsel; and in this meeting the judgment was given that Magnus should be deposed from his dominions, and should no longer be called king. Then he was delivered to the king's slaves, who mutilated him, picked out both his eyes, cut off one foot, and at last castrated him. Ivar Assurson was blinded, and Hakon Fauk killed. The whole country then was reduced to obedience under King Harald. Afterwards it was diligently examined who were King Magnus's best friends, or who knew most of his concealments of treasure or valuables. The holy cross King Magnus had kept beside him since the battle of Fyrlreif, but would not tell where it was deposited for preservation. Bishop Reinald of Stavanger, who was an Englishman, was considered very greedy of money. He was a great friend of King Magnus, and it was thought likely that great treasure and valuables had been given into his keeping. Men were sent for him accordingly, and he came to Bergen, where it was insisted against him that he had some knowledge of such treasure; but he denied it altogether, would not admit it, and offered to clear himself by ordeal. King Harald would not have this, but laid on the bishop a money fine of fifteen marks of gold, which he should pay to the king. The bishop declared he would not thus impoverish his bishop's see, but would rather offer his life. On this they hanged the bishop out on the holm, beside the sling machine. As he was going to the gallows he threw the sock from his foot, and said with an oath, "I know no more about King Magnus's treasure than what is in this sock;" and in it there was a gold ring. Bishop Reinald was buried at Nordnes in Michael's church, and this deed was much blamed. After this Harald Gille was sole king of Norway as long as he lived.

9. WONDERFUL OMENS IN KONUNGAEHELLA.

Five years after King Sigurd's death remarkable occurrences took place in Konungahella (A.D. 1135). Guthorm, a son of Harald Fletter, and Saemund Husfreyja, were at that time the king's officers there. Saemund was married to Ingebjorg, a daughter of the priest Andres Brunson. Their sons were Paul Flip and Gunne Fis. Saemund's natural son was called Asmund. Andres Brunson was a very remarkable man, who carried on divine service in the Cross church. His wife was called Solveig. Jon Loftson, who was then

eleven years old, was in their house to be fostered and educated. The priest Lopt Saemundson, Jon's father, was also in the town at that time. The priest Andres and Solveig had a daughter by name Helga, who was Einar's wife. It happened now in Konungahella, the next Sunday night after Easter week, that there was a great noise in the streets through the whole town as if the king was going through with all his court-men. The dogs were so affected that nobody could hold them, but they slipped loose; and when they came out they ran mad, biting all that came in their way, people and cattle. All who were bitten by them till the blood came turned raging mad; and pregnant women were taken in labour prematurely, and became mad. From Easter to Ascension-day, these portentous circumstances took place almost every night. People were dreadfully alarmed at these wonders; and many made themselves ready to remove, sold their houses, and went out to the country districts, or to other towns. The most intelligent men looked upon it as something extremely remarkable; were in dread of it; and said, as it proved to be, that it was an omen of important events which had not yet taken place. And the priest Andres, on Whit Sunday, made a long and excellent speech, and turned the conclusion of it to the distressing situation of the townspeople; telling them to muster courage, and not lay waste their excellent town by deserting it, but rather to take the utmost care in all things, and use the greatest foresight against all dangers, as of fire or the enemy, and to pray to God to have mercy on them.

10. THE RISE OF WAR IN KONUNGAHELLA.

Thirteen loaded merchant ships made ready to leave the town, intending to proceed to Bergen; but eleven of them were lost, men and goods, and all that was in them; the twelfth was lost also, but the people were saved, although the cargo went to the bottom. At that time the priest Lopt went north to Bergen, with all that belonged to him, and arrived safely. The merchant vessels were lost on Saint Lawrence eve (August 10). The Danish king Eirik and the Archbishop Assur, both sent notice to Konungahella to keep watch on their town; and said the Vindland people had a great force on foot with which they made war far around on Christian people, and usually gained the victory. But the townspeople attended very little to this warning, were indifferent, and forgot more and more the dreadful omens the longer it was since they happened. On the holy Saint Lawrence day, while the words of high mass were spoken, came to the Vindland king Rettibur to Konungahella with 550 Vindland cutters, and in each cutter were forty-four men and two horses. The king's sister's son Dunimiz, and Unibur, a chief who ruled over many people, were with him. These two chiefs rowed at once, with a part of their troops, up the east arm of the Gaut river past Hising Isle, and thus came down to the town; but a part of the fleet lay in the western arm, and came so to the town. They made fast their ships at the piles, and landed their horses, and rode over the height of Bratsas, and from thence up around the town. Einar, a relation of priest Andres, brought these tidings up to the Castle church; for there the whole inhabitants of the town were gathered to hear high mass. Einar came just as the priest Andres was holding his discourse; and he told the people that an army was sailing up against the town with a great number of ships of war, and that some people were riding over Bratsas. Many said it must be the Danish king Eirik, and from him they might expect peace. The people ran down into the town to their properties, armed themselves, and went down upon the piers, whence they immediately saw there was an enemy and an immense army. Nine East-country trading vessels belonging to the merchants were afloat in the river at the piers. The Vindland people first directed their course toward these and fought with the merchants, who armed themselves, and defended themselves long, well, and manfully. There was a hard battle, and resistance, before the merchant vessels were cleared of their men; and in this conflict the Vindland people lost 150 of their ships, with all the men on board. When the battle was sharpest the townsmen stood upon the piers, and shot at the heathens. But when the fight slackened the burgesses fled up to the town, and from thence into the castle; and the men took with them all their valuable articles, and

such goods as they could carry. Solveig and her daughters, with two other women, went on shore when the Vindlanders took possession of the merchant vessels. Now the Vindlanders landed, and mustered their men, and discovered their loss. Some of them went up into the town, some on board the merchant ships, and took all the goods they pleased; and then they set fire to the town, and burnt it and the ships. They hastened then with all their army to assault the castle.

11. THE SECOND BATTLE.

King Rettibur made an offer to those who were in the castle that they should go out, and he would give them their lives, weapons, clothes, silver, and gold; but all exclaimed against it, and went out on the fortification; some shot, some threw stones, some sharp stakes. It was a great battle, in which many fell on both sides, but by far the most of the Vindlanders. Solveig came up to a large farm called Solbjorg, and brought the news. A message war-token was there split, and sent out to Skurbagar, where there happened to be a joint ale-drinking feast, and many men were assembled. A bonde called Olver Miklimun (Mickle Mouth) was there, who immediately sprang up, took helmet and shield, and a great axe in his hand, and said, "Stand up, brave lads, and take your weapons. Let us go help the townspeople; for it would appear shameful to every man who heard of it, if we sit here sipping our ale, while good men in the town are losing their lives by our neglect."

Many made an objection, and said they would only be losing their own lives, without being of any assistance to the townspeople.

Then said Olver, "Although all of you should hold back, I will go alone; and one or two heathens, at any rate, shall fall before I fall."

He ran down to the town, and a few men after him to see what he would do, and also whether they could assist him in any way. When he came near the castle, and the heathens saw him, they sent out eight men fully armed against him; and when they met, the heathen men ran and surrounded him on all sides. Olver lifted his axe, and struck behind him with the extreme point of it, hitting the neck of the man who was coming up behind him, so that his throat and jawbone were cut through, and he fell dead backwards. Then he heaved his axe forwards, and struck the next man in the head, and clove him down to the shoulders. He then fought with the others, and killed two of them; but was much wounded himself. The four who remained took to flight, but Olver ran after them. There was a ditch before them, and two of the heathens jumped into it, and Olver killed them both; but he stuck fast himself in the ditch, so that two of the eight heathens escaped. The men who had followed Olver took him up, and brought him back to Skurbagar, where his wounds were bound and healed; and it was the talk of the people, that no single man had ever made such a bloody onset. Two lendenmen, Sigurd Gyrdsen, a brother of Philip, and Sigard, came with 600 men to Skurbagar; on which Sigurd turned back with 400 men. He was but little respected afterwards, and soon died. Sigard, on the other hand, proceeded with 200 men towards the town; and they gave battle to the heathens, and were all slain. While the Vindlanders were storming the castle, their king and his chiefs were out of the battle. At one place there was a man among the Vindlanders shooting with a bow, and killing a man for every arrow; and two men stood before him, and covered him with their shields. Then Saemund Husfreyja said to his son Asmund, that they should both shoot together at this bowman. "But I will shoot at the man who holds the shield before him." He did so, and he knocked the shield down a little before the man; and in the same instant Asmund shot between the shields, and the arrow hit the bowman in the forehead, so that it came out at his neck, and he fell down dead. When the Vindlanders saw it they howled like dogs, or like wolves. Then King Rettibur called to them that he would give them safety and life, but they refused terms. The heathens again made a hard assault. One of the heathens in particular fought so bravely, and ventured so near, that he came quite up to the castle-gate, and pierced the man who stood outside the gate with his sword; and although they used both arrows and stones against him, and he had neither shield nor hel-

met, nothing could touch him, for he was so skilled in witchcraft that weapon could not wound him. Then priest Andres took consecrated fire; blew upon it; cut tinder in pieces, and laid it on the fire; and then laid the tinder on the arrow-point, and gave it to Asmund. He shot this arrow at the warlock; and the shaft hit so well that it did its business, and the man of witchcraft fell dead. Then the heathens crowded together as before, howling and whining dreadfully; and all gathered about their king, on which the Christians believed that they were holding a council about retreating. The interpreters, who understood the Vindland tongue, heard the chief Unibur make the following speech: "These people are brave, and it is difficult to make anything of them; and even if we took all the goods in their town, we might willingly give as much more that we had never come here, so great has been our loss of men and chiefs. Early in the day, when we began to assault the castle, they defended themselves first with arrows and spears; then they fought against us with stones; and now with sticks and staves, as against dogs. I see from this that they are in want of weapons and means of defense; so we shall make one more hard assault, and try their strength." It was as he said, that they now fought with stakes; because, in the first assault, they had imprudently used up all their missile weapons and stones; and now when the Christians saw the number of their stakes diminishing, they claved each stake in two. The heathens now made a very hot attack, and rested themselves between whiles, and on both sides they were exhausted. During a rest the Vindland king Rettibur again offered terms, and that they should retain the weapons, clothes, and silver they could carry out of the castle. Saemund Husfreyja had fallen, and the men who remained gave the counsel to deliver up the castle and themselves into the power of the heathens; but it was a foolish counsel; for the heathens did not keep their promises, but took all people, men, women, and children, and killed all of them who were wounded or young, or could not easily be carried with them. They took all the goods that were in the castle; went into the Cross church, and plundered it of all its ornaments. The priest Andres gave King Rettibur a silver-mounted gilt sceptre, and to his sister's son Dunimiz he gave a gold ring. They supposed from this that he was a man of great importance in the town, and held him in higher respect than the others. They took away with them the holy cross, and also the tables which stood before the altar, which Sigurd had got made in the Greek country, and had brought home himself. These they took, and laid flat down on the steps before the altar. Then the heathens went out of the church. Rettibur said, "This house has been adorned with great zeal for the God to whom it is dedicated; but, methinks, He has shown little regard for the town or house: so I see their God has been angry at those who defended them." King Rettibur gave the priest Andres the church, the shrine, the holy cross, the Bible, the altar-book, and four clerks (prisoners); but the heathens burnt the Castle church, and all the houses that were in the castle. As the fire they had set to the church went out twice, they hewed the church down, and then it burnt like other houses. Then the heathens went to their ships with the booty; but when they mustered their people and saw their loss, they made prisoners of all the people, and divided them among the vessels. Now priest Andres went on board the king's ship with the holy cross, and there came a great terror over the heathens on account of the portentous circumstance which took place in the king's ship; namely, it became so hot that all thought they were to be burnt up. The king ordered the interpreter to ask the priest why this happened. He replied, that the Almighty God on whom the Christians believed, sent them a proof of His anger, that they who would not believe in their Creator presumed to lay hands on the emblem of His suffering; and that there lay so much power in the cross, that such, and even clearer miracles, happened to heathen men who had taken the cross in their hands. The king had the priest put into the ship's boat, and the priest Andres carried the holy cross in his grasp. They led the boat along past the ship's bow, and then along the side of the next ship, and then shoved it with a boat-hook in beside the pier. Then Andres went with the cross by night to Solbjorg, in rain and dreadful weather; but brought it in good preservation. King Rettibur, and the men he had remaining, went home to Vindland, and many of the people who were taken at Konungahella were long afterwards in slav-

ery in Vindland; and those who were ransomed and came back to Norway to their udal lands and properties, thrrove worse than before their capture. The merchant town of Konungahella has never since risen to the importance it was of before this event.

12. OF MAGNUS THE BLIND.

King Magnus, after he was deprived of sight, went north to Nidaros, where he went into the cloister on the holm, and assumed the monk's dress. The cloister received the farm of Great Hernes in Frosta for his support. King Harald alone ruled the country the following winter, gave all men peace and pardon who desired it, and took many of the men into his court-service who had been with King Magnus. Einar Skulason says that King Harald had two battles in Denmark; the one at Hvedn Isle, and the other at Hlesey Isle:—

Unwearied champion! who wast bred
To stain thy blue-edged weapons red!
Beneath high Hvedn's rocky shore,
The faithless felt thy steel once more.

And again, thus:—

On Hlesey's plain the foe must quail
'Fore him who dyes their shirts of mail.
His storm-stretched banner o'er his head
Flies straight, and fills the foe with dread.

13. OF KING HARALD GILLE AND BISHOP MAGNUS.

King Harald Gille was a very generous man. It is told that in his time Magnus Einarson came from Iceland to be consecrated a bishop, and the king received him well, and showed him much respect. When the bishop was ready to sail for Iceland again, and the ship was rigged out for sea, he went to the hall where the king was drinking, saluted him politely and warmly, and the king received him joyfully. The queen was sitting beside the king.

Then said the king, "Are you ready, bishop, for your voyage?" He replied that he was.

The king said, "You come to us just now at a bad time; for the tables are just removed, and there is nothing at hand suitable to present to you. What is there to give the bishop?"

The treasurer replies, "Sire, as far as I know, all articles of any value are given away."

The king: "Here is a drinking goblet remaining; take this, bishop; it is not without value."

The bishop expressed his thanks for the honour shown him.

Then said the queen, "Farewell, bishop! and a happy voyage."

The king said to her, "When did you ever hear a noble lady say so to a bishop without giving him something?"

She replies, "Sire, what have I to give him?"

The king: "Thou hast the cushion under thee."

Thereupon this, which was covered with costly cloth, and was a valuable article, was given to the bishop. When the bishop was going away the king took the cushion from under himself and gave it him, saying, "They have long been together." When the bishop arrived in Iceland to his bishop's see, it was talked over what should be done with the goblet that would be serviceable for the king; and when the bishop asked the opinion of other people, many thought it should be sold, and the value-bestowed on the poor. Then said the bishop, "I will take another plan. I will have a chalice made of it for this church, and consecrate it, so that all the saints of whom there are relics in this church shall let the king have some good for his gift every time a mass is sung over it." This chalice has since belonged to the bishopric of Skalholt; and of the costly cloth with which the cushions given him by the king were covered, were made the choristers' cloaks which are now in Skalholt. From this the generous spirit of King Harald may be seen, as well as from many other things, of which but a few are set down here.

14. BEGINNING OF SIGURD SLEMBIDJAKN.

There was a man, by name Sigurd, who was brought up in Norway, and was called priest Adalbrikt's son. Sigurd's mother was

Thora, a daughter of Saxe of Vik, a sister of Sigrid, who was mother of King Olaf Magnuson, and of Kare, the king's brother who married Borghild, a daughter of Dag Eilifson. Their sons were Sigurd of Austrat and Dag. Sigurd of Austrat's sons were Jon of Austrat, Thorstein, and Andres the Deaf. Jon was married to Sigrid, a sister of King Inge and of Duke Skule. This Sigurd, in his childhood, was kept at his book, became a clerk, and was consecrated a deacon; but as he ripened in years and strength he became a very clever man, stout, strong, distinguished for all perfections and exercises beyond any of his years,—indeed, beyond any man in Norway. Sigurd showed early traces of a haughty ungovernable spirit, and was therefore called Slembidjakn. He was as handsome a man as could be seen, with rather thin but beautiful hair. When it came to Sigurd's ears that his mother said King Magnus was his father, he laid aside all clerkship; and as soon as he was old enough to be his own master, he left the country. He was a long time on his travels, went to Palestine; was at the Jordan river; and visited many holy places, as pilgrims usually do. When he came back, he applied himself to trading expeditions. One winter he was in Orkney with Earl Harald, and was with him when Thorkel Fostre Summarlidason was killed. Sigurd was also in Scotland with the Scottish king David, and was held in great esteem by him. Thereafter Sigurd went to Denmark; and according to the account of himself and his men, he there submitted to the iron ordeal to confirm his paternal descent, and proved by it, in the presence of five bishops, that he was a son of King Magnus Barefoot. So says Ivar Ingemundson, in Sigurd's song:—

The holiest five
Of men alive,—
Bishops were they,—
Solemnly say,
The iron glowing
Red hot, yet showing
No scath on skin,
Proves cause and kin.

King Harald Gille's friends, however, said this was only a lie, and deceit of the Danes.

15. SIGURD IN ICELAND.

It is told before of Sigurd that he passed some years in merchant voyages, and he came thus to Iceland one winter, and took up his lodging with Thorgils Odson in Saurby; but very few knew where he was. In autumn, when the sheep were being driven into a fold to be slaughtered, a sheep that was to be caught ran to Sigurd; and as Sigurd thought the sheep ran to him for protection, he stretched out his hands to it and lifted it over the fold dyke, and let it run to the hills, saying, "There are not many who seek help from me, so I may well help this one." It happened the same winter that a woman had committed a theft, and Thorgils, who was angry at her for it, was going to punish her; but she ran to Sigurd to ask his help, and he set her upon the bench by his side. Thorgils told him to give her up, and told him what she had committed; but Sigurd begged forgiveness for her since she had come to him for protection, and that Thorgils would dismiss the complaint against her, but Thorgils insisted that she should receive her punishment. When Sigurd saw that Thorgils would not listen to his entreaty, he started up, drew his sword, and bade him take her if he dared; and Thorgils seeing that Sigurd would defend the woman by force of arms, and observing his commanding mien, guessed who he must be, desisted from pursuing the woman, and pardoned her. There were many foreign men there, and Sigurd made the least appearance among them. One day Sigurd came into the sitting-room, and a Northman who was splendidly clothed was playing chess with one of Thorads house-servants. The Northman called Sigurd, and asked him his advice how to play; but when Sigurd looked at the board, he saw the game was lost. The man who was playing against the Northman had a sore foot, so that one toe was bruised, and matter was coming out of it. Sigurd, who was sitting on the bench, takes a straw, and draws it along the floor, so that some young kittens ran after it. He drew the straw always before them, until they came near the house-servant's foot, who jumping up with a scream, threw the chessmen in disorder on the board; and thus it was a dispute how the game had stood. This is given as a proof

of Sigurd's cunning. People did not know that he was a learned clerk until the Saturday before Easter, when he consecrated the holy water with chant; and the longer he stayed there the more he was esteemed. The summer after, Sigurd told Thorgils before they parted, that he might with all confidence address his friends to Sigurd Slembidjakn. Thorgils asked how nearly he was related to him, on which he replies, "I am Sigurd Slembidjakn, a son of King Magnus Barefoot." He then left Iceland.

16. OF SIGURD SLEMBE.

When Harald Gille had been six years (A.D. 1136), king of Norway, Sigurd came to the country and went to his brother King Harald, and found him in Bergen. He placed himself entirely in the king's hands, disclosed who his father was, and asked him to acknowledge their relationship. The king gave him no hasty or distinct reply; but laid the matter before his friends in a conference at a specially appointed meeting. After this conference it became known that the king laid an accusation against Sigurd, because he had been at the killing of Thorkel Fostre in the West. Thorkel had accompanied Harald to Norway when he first came to the country, and had been one of Harald's best friends. This case was followed up so severely, that a capital accusation against Sigurd was made, and, by the advice of the lendersmen, was carried so far, that some of the king's pursuivants went one evening late to Sigurd, and called him to them. They then took a boat and rowed away with Sigurd from the town south to Nordnes. Sigurd sat on a chest in the stern of the boat, and had his suspicions that foul play was intended. He was clothed in blue trousers, and over his shirt he had a hood tied with ribands, which served him for a cloak. He sat looking down, and holding his hood-strings; and sometimes moved them over his head, sometimes let them fall again before him. Now when they had passed the ness, they were drunk, and merry, were rowing so eagerly that they were not taking notice of anything. Sigurd stood up, and went on the boat's deck; but the two men who were placed to guard him stood up also, and followed him to the side of the vessel, holding by his cloak, as is the custom in guarding people of distinction. As he was afraid that they would catch hold of more of his clothes, he seized them both, and leaped overboard with them. The boat, in the meantime, had gone on a long way, and it was a long time before those on board could turn the vessel, and long before they could get their own men taken on board again; and Sigurd dived under water, and swam so far away that he reached the land before they could get the boat turned to pursue him. Sigurd, who was very swift of foot, hied up to the mountains, and the king's men travelled about the whole night seeking him without finding him. He lay down in a cleft of the rocks; and as he was very cold he took off his trousers, cut a hole in the seat of them, and stuck his head through it, and put his arms in the legs of them. He escaped with life this time; and the king's men returned, and could not conceal their unsuccessful adventure.

17. TREACHERY TOWARDS KING HARALD.

Sigurd thought now that it would be of no use to seek any help from King Harald again; and he kept himself concealed all the autumn and the beginning of the winter. He lay hid in Bergen, in the house of a priest. King Harald was also in the town, and many great people with him. Now Sigurd considered how, with his friends' help, he might take the king by surprise, and make an end of him. Many men took part in this design; and among them some who were King Harald's court-men and chamberlains, but who had formerly been King Magnus's court-men. They stood in great favour with the king, and some of them sat constantly at the king's table. On Saint Lucia's day (December 13), in the evening when they proposed to execute this treason, two men sat at the king's table talking together; and one of them said to the king, "Sire, we two table-companions submit our dispute to your judgment, having made a wager of a basket of honey to him who guesses right. I say that you will sleep this night with your Queen Ingerid; and he says that you will sleep with Thora, Guthorm's daughter."

The king answered laughing, and without suspecting in the least that there lay treachery under the question, that he who had asked had lost his bet.

They knew thus where he was to be found that night; but the main guard was without the house in which most people thought the king would sleep, viz., that which the queen was in.

18. MURDER OF KING HARALD.

Sigurd Slembe, and some men who were in his design, came in the night to the lodging in which King Harald was sleeping; killed the watchman first; then broke open the door, and went in with drawn swords. Ivar Kolbeinson made the first attack on King Harald; and as the king had been drunk when he went to bed he slept sound, and awoke only when the men were striking at him. Then he said in his sleep, "Thou art treating me hardly, Thora." She sprang up, saying, "They are treating thee hardly who love thee less than I do." Harald was deprived of life. Then Sigurd went out with his helpers, and ordered the men to be called to him who had promised him their support if he should get King Harald taken out of the way. Sigurd and his men then went on, and took a boat, set themselves to the oars, and rowed out in front of the king's house; and then it was just beginning to be daylight. Then Sigurd stood up, spoke to those who were standing on the king's pier, made known to them the murder of King Harald by his hand, and desired that they would take him, and choose him as chief according to his birth. Now came many swarming down to the pier from the king's house; and all with one voice replied, that they would never give obedience or service to a man who had murdered his own brother. "And if thou are not his brother, thou hast no claim from descent to be king." They clashed their weapons together, and adjudged all murderers to be banished and outlawed men. Now the king's horn sounded, and all lendersmen and courtmen were called together. Sigurd and his companions saw it was best for them to get away; and he went northward to North Hordaland, where he held a Thing with the bondes, who submitted to him, and gave him the title of king. From thence he went to Sogn, and held a Thing there with the bondes and was proclaimed king. Then he went north across the fjords, and most people supported his cause. So says Ivar Ingemundson:—

On Harald's fall
The bondes all,
In Hord and Sogn,
Took Magnus' son.
The Things swore too
They would be true
To this new head
In Harald's stead.

King Harald was buried in the old Christ church.

SAGA OF SIGURD, INGE, AND EYSTEIN, THE SONS OF HARALD

1. HISTORY OF KINGS SIGURD AND INGE.

Queen Ingerid, and with her the lendersmen and the court which had been with King Harald, resolved to send a fast-sailing vessel to Thronhjelm to make known King Harald's death, and also to desire the Thronhjelm people to take King Harald's son Sigurd for king. He was then in the north, and was fostered by Sadagyrð Bardson. Queen Ingerid herself proceeded eastward immediately to Viken. Inge was the name of her son by King Harald, and he was then fostered by Amunde Gyrdson, a grandson of Logberse. When they came to Viken a Borgar-thing was immediately called together, at which Inge, who was in the second year of his age, was chosen king. This resolution was supported by Amunde and Thjostolf Alason, together with many other great chiefs. Now when the tidings came north to Thronhjelm that King Harald was murdered, the Thronhjelm people took Sigurd, King Harald's son, to be the king; and this resolution was supported by Ottar Birthing, Peter Saudaulfson, the brothers Guthorm of Reine, and Ottar Balle, sons of Asolf and many other great chiefs. Afterwards the whole nation almost submitted to the brothers, and principally because their father was considered holy; and the country took the oath

to them, that the kingly power should not go to any other man as long as any of King Harald's sons were alive.

2. OF SIGURD SLEMBIDJAKN.

Sigurd Slembe sailed north around Stad; and when he came to North More, he found that letters and full powers had arrived before him from the leaders who had given in their allegiance to Harald's sons; so that there he got no welcome or help. As Sigurd himself had but few people with him, he resolved to go with them to Thronhjelm, and seek out Magnus the Blind; for he had already sent a message before him to Magnus's friends. Now when they came to the town, they rowed up the river Nid to meet King Magnus, and fastened their land-ropes on the shore at the king's house; but were obliged to set off immediately, for all the people rose against them. They then landed at Monkhelm, and took Magnus the Blind out of the cloister against the will of the monks; for he had been consecrated a monk. It is said by some that Magnus willingly went with them; although it was differently reported, in order to make his cause appear better. Sigurd, immediately after Yule (January, A.D. 1137), went forth with his suite, expecting aid from his relations and Magnus's friends, and which they also got. Sigurd sailed with his men out of the fjord, and was joined afterwards by Bjorn Egilson, Gunnar of Gimsar, Haldor Sigurdson, Aslak Hakonson, the brothers Bendikt and Eirik, and also the court which had before been with King Magnus, and many others. With this troop they went south to More, and down to the mouth of Raumsdal fjord. Here Sigurd and Magnus divided their forces, and Sigurd went immediately westwards across the sea. King Magnus again proceeded to the Uplands, where he expected much help and strength, and which he obtained. He remained there the winter and all the summer (A.D. 1137), and had many people with him; but King Inge proceeded against him with all his forces, and they met at a place called Mynne. There was a great battle, at which King Magnus had the most people. It is related that Thjostolf Alason carried King Inge in his belt as long as the battle lasted, and stood under the banner; but Thjostolf was hard pressed by fatigue and fighting; and it is commonly said that King Inge got his ill health there, and which he retained as long as he lived, so that his back was knotted into a hump, and the one foot was shorter than the other; and he was besides so infirm that he could scarcely walk as long as he lived. The defeat began to turn upon Magnus and his men; and in the front rank of his array fell Haldor Sigurdson, Bjorn Egilson, Gunnar of Gimsar, and a great number of his men, before he himself would take to his horse and fly. So says Kolle:—

Thy arrow-storm on Mynne's banks
Fast thinn'd the foemen's strongest ranks;
Thy good sword hewed the raven's feast
On Mynne's banks up in the East.
Shield clashed on shield, and bucklers broke
Under thy battle-axe's stroke;
While thou, uncovered, urged the fray,
Thy shield and mail-coat thrown away.

And also this:—

The king to heaven belonging fled,
When thou, in war's quick death-game bred,
Unpanzered, shieldless on the plain
His heavy steel-clad guards hadst slain.
The painted shield, and steel-plate mail,
Before thy fierce attack soon fail,
To Magnus who belongs to heaven,
Was no such fame in battle given.

Magnus fled eastward to Gautland, and then to Denmark. At that time there was in Gautland an earl, Karl Sonason, who was a great and ambitious man. Magnus the Blind and his men said, wherever they happened to meet with chiefs, that Norway lay quite open to any great chieftain who would attack it; for it might well be said there was no king in the country, and the kingdom was only ruled by lendersmen, and, among those who had most sway, there was, from mutual jealousy, most discord. Now Karl, being ambitious of power, listens willingly to such speeches; collects men, and rides west to Viken, where many people, out of fear, submit to him. When Thjostolf Alason and Amunde heard of this, they went with the men they could get together, and took

King Inge with them. They met Earl Karl and the Gautland army eastward in Krokaskog, where there was a great battle and a great defeat, King Inge gaining the victory. Munan Ogmundson, Earl Karl's mother's brother, fell there. Ogmund, the father of Munan, was a son of Earl Orm Eilifson, and Sigrid, a daughter of Earl Fin Arnason. Astrid, Ogrnund's daughter, was the mother of Earl Karl. Many others of the Gautland people fell at Krokaskog; and the earl fled eastward through the forest. King Inge pursued them all the way out of the kingdom; and this expedition turned out a great disgrace to them. So says Kolle:—

I must proclaim how our great lord
Coloured deep red his ice-cold sword;
And ravens played with Gautland bones,
And wolves heard Gautlanders' last groans.
Their silly jests were well repaid,—
In Krokaskog their laugh was laid:
Thy battle power was then well tried,
And they who won may now deride.

3. KING EIRIK'S EXPEDITION TO NORWAY.

Magnus the Blind then went to Denmark to King Eirik Eimune, where he was well received. He offered the king to follow him if he would invade Norway with a Danish army, and subdue the country; saying, that if he came to Norway with his army, no man in Norway would venture to throw a spear against him. The king allowed himself to be moved by Magnus's persuasions, ordered a levy, and went north to Norway with 200 ships; and Magnus and his men were with him on this expedition. When they came to Viken, they proceeded peacefully and gently on the east side of the fjord; but when the fleet came westward to Tunsberg, a great number of King Inge's lendemen came against them. Their leader was Vatnorm Dagson, a brother of Gregorius. The Danes could not land to get water without many of them being killed; and therefore they went in through the fjord to Oslo, where Thjostolf Alason opposed them. It is told that some people wanted to carry the holy Halvard's coffin out of the town in the evening when the fleet was first observed, and as many as could took hold of it; but the coffin became so heavy that they could not carry it over the church floor. The morning after, however, when they saw the fleet sailing in past the Hofud Isle, four men carried the coffin out of the town, and Thjostolf and all the townspeople followed it.

4. THE TOWN OF OSLO BURN'T.

King Eirik and his army advanced against the town; and some of his men hastened after Thjostolf and his troop. Thjostolf threw a spear at a man named Askel, which hit him under the throat, so that the spear point went through his neck; and Thjostolf thought he had never made a better spear-cast, for, except the place he hit, there was nothing bare to be seen. The shrine of St. Halvard, was taken up to Raumarike, where it remained for three months. Thjostolf went up to Raumarike, and collected men during the night, with whom he returned towards the town in the morning. In the meantime King Eirik set fire to Halvard's church, and to the town, which was entirely burnt. Thjostolf came soon after to the town with the men he had assembled, and Eirik sailed off with his fleet; but could not land anywhere on that side of the fjord, on account of the troops of the lendemen who came down against them; and wherever they attempted a landing, they left five or six men or more upon the strand. King Inge lay with a great number of people into Hornborusund, but when he learned this, he turned about southwards to Denmark again. King Inge pursued him, and took from him all the ships he could get hold of; and it was a common observation among people, that never was so poor an expedition made with so great an armament in another king's dominions. King Eirik was ill pleased at it, and thought King Magnus and his men had been making a fool of him by encouraging him to undertake this expedition, and he declared he would never again besuch friends with them as before.

5. OF SIGURD SLEMBIDJAKN.

Sigurd Slembidjakk came that summer from the West sea to Norway, where he heard of his relation King Magnus's unlucky expedition; so he expected no welcome in Norway, but sailed south,

outside the rocks, past the land, and set over to Denmark, and went into the Sound. He fell in with some Vindland cutters south of the islands, gave them battle, and gained the victory. He cleared eight ships, killing many of the men, and he hanged the others.

He also had a battle off the Island Mon with the Vindland men, and gained a victory. He then sailed from the south and came to the eastern arm of the Gaut river, and took three ships of the fleet of Thorer Hvinantorde, and Olaf, the son of Harald Kesia, who was Sigurd's own sister's son; for Ragnhild, the mother of Olaf, was a daughter of King Magnus Barefoot. He drove Olaf up the country.

Thjostolf was at this time in Konungahella, and had collected people to defend the country, and Sigurd steered thither with his fleet. They shot at each other, but he could not effect a landing; and, on both sides, many were killed and many wounded. Ulfhedin Saxolfson, Sigurd's forecandle man, fell there. He was an Iclander, from the north quarter. Sigurd continued his course northwards to Viken and plundered far and wide around. Now when Sigurd lay in a harbour called Portyrja on Limgard's coast, and watched the ships going to or coming from Viken to plunder them, the Tunsberg men collected an armed force against him, and came unexpectedly upon them while Sigurd and his men were on shore dividing their booty. Some of the men came down from the land, but some of the other party laid themselves with their ships right across the harbour outside of them. Sigurd ran up into his ship, and rowed out against them. Vatnorm's ship was the nearest, and he let his ship fall behind the line, and Sigurd rowed clear past, and thus escaped with one ship and the loss of many men. This verse was made upon Vatnorm:—

The water serpent, people say,
From Portyrja slipped away.

6. THE MURDER OF BEINTEIN.

Sigurd Slembidjakk sailed from thence to Denmark; and at that time a man was lost in his ship, whose name was Kolbein Thorliotson of Batald. He was sitting in a boat which was made fast to the vessel, and upset because she was sailing quickly. When they came south to Denmark, Sigurd's ship itself was cast away; but he got to Alaborg, and was there in winter. The summer after (A.D. 1138) Magnus and Sigurd sailed together from the south with seven ships, and came unexpectedly in the night to Lister, where they laid their ships on the land. Beintein Kolbeinson, a courtman of King Inge, and a very brave man, was there. Sigurd and his men jumped on shore at daylight, came unexpectedly on the people, surrounded the house, and were setting fire to the buildings; but Beintein came out of a store-house with his weapons, well armed, and stood within the door with drawn sword, his shield before him, helmet on, and ready to defend himself. The door was somewhat low. Sigurd asked which of his lads had most desire to go in against Beintein, which he called brave man's work; but none was very hurried to make ready for it. While they were discussing this matter Sigurd rushed into the house, past Beintein. Beintein struck at him, but missed him. Sigurd turned instantly on Beintein; and after exchanging blows, Sigurd gave him his death-stroke, and came out presently bearing his head in his hands.

They took all the goods that were in the farm-house, carried the booty to their ships, and sailed away. When King Inge and his friends, and also Kolbein's sons, Sigurd and Gyrð, the brothers of Beintein, heard of Beintein's murder, the king sent a great force against Sigurd Slembe and his followers; and also travelled himself, and took a ship from Hakon Paulson Pungelta, who was a daughter's son of Aslak, a son of Erling Skjalgson of Sole, and cousin of Hakon Mage. King Inge drove Hakon and his followers up the country, and took all their gear. Sigurd Stork, a son of Eindride of Gautdal, and his brother, Eirik Hael, and Andres Kelduskit, son of Grim of Vist, all fled away into the fjords. But Sigurd Slembe, Magnus the Blind and Thorieif Skiappa sailed outside the isles with three ships north to Halogaland; and Magnus was in winter (A.D. 1139) north in Bjarkey Isle with Vidkun Jonson. But Sigurd had the stem and stern-post of his ship cut out, made a hole in her, and sank her in the inner part of Egisfjord, and thereafter he passed the winter at Tialdasund by Gljufrafjord in Hin. Far up the fjord there is a cave in the rock; in that place

Sigurd sat with his followers, who were above twenty men, secretly, and hung a grey cloth before the mouth of the hole, so that no person could see them from the strand. Thorleif Skiappa, and Einar, son of Ogmund of Sand, and of Gudrun, daughter of Einar Arason of Reikiaholar, procured food for Sigurd during the winter. It is said that Sigurd made the Laplanders construct two boats for him during the winter up in the fjord; and they were fastened together with deer sinews, without nails, and with twigs of willow instead of knees, and each boat could carry twelve men. Sigurd was with the Laplanders while they were making the boats; and the Laplanders had good ale, with which they entertained Sigurd. Sigurd made these lines on it:—

"In the Lapland tent
Brave days we spent.
Under the grey birch tree;
In bed or on bank
We knew no rank,
And a merry crew were we.
"Good ale went round
As we sat on the ground,
Under the grey birch tree;
And up with the smoke
Flew laugh and joke,
And a merry crew were we.

These boats were so light that no ship could overtake them in the water, according to what was sung at the time:—

Our skin-sewed Fin-boats lightly swim,
Over the sea like wind they skim.
Our ships are built without a nail;
Few ships like ours can row or sail.

In spring Sigurd and Magnus went south along the coast with the two boats which the Laplanders had made; and when they came to Vagar they killed Svein the priest and his two sons.

7. OF SIGURD'S SLEMBE'S CAMPAIGN.

Thereafter Sigurd came south to Vikar, and seized King Sigurd's lendemen, William Skinnare and Thorald Kept, and killed them both. Then Sigurd turned south-wards along the coast, and met Styrkar Glaesirofa south of Byrda, as he was coming from the south from the town of Nidaros, and killed him. Now when Sigurd came south to Valsnes, he met Svinagrim outside of the ness, and cut off his right hand. From thence he went south to More, past the mouth of the Thronthjem fjord, where they took Hedin Hirdmage and Kalf Kringluaue. They let Hedin escape, but killed Kalf. When King Sigurd, and his foster-father, Sadagyrd, heard of Sigurd Slembidjakk's proceedings, and what he was doing, they sent people to search for him; and their leader was Jon Kauda, a son of Kalf Range. Bishop Ivar's brother, and besides the priest Jon Smyril. They went on board the ship the Reindeer, which had twenty-two rowing benches, and was one of the swiftest sailing vessels, to seek Sigurd; but as they could not find him, they returned north-wards with little glory; for people said that they had got sight of Sigurd and his people, and durst not attack them. Afterwards Sigurd proceeded southwards to Hordaland, and came to Herdla, where Einar, a son of Laxapaul, had a farm; and went into Hamar's fjord, to the Gangdaga-thing. They took all the goods that were at the farm, and a long-ship of twenty-two benches which belonged to Einar; and also his son, four years old, who was living with one of his labouring people. Some wanted to kill the boy, but others took him and carried him with them. The labouring man said, "It will not be lucky for you to kill the child; and it will be of no use to you to carry him away, for it is my son, and not Einar's." And on his word they let the boy remain, and went away. When Einar came home he gave the labourer money to the value of two ore of gold, and thanked him for his clever invention, and promised him his constant friendship. So says Eirik Odson, who first wrote down this relation; and he heard himself Einar Paulson telling these circumstances in Bergen. Sigurd then went southward along the coast all the way east to Viken, and met Fin Saudaulfson east at Kvildar, as he was engaged in drawing in King Inge's rents and duties, and hanged him. Then they sailed south to Denmark.

8. OF KING INGE'S LETTER TO KING SIGURD.

The people of Viken and of Bergen complained that it was wrong for King Sigurd and his friends to be sitting quietly north in the town of Nidaros, while his father's murderer was cruising about in the ordinary passage at the mouth of the Thronthjem fjord; and King Inge and his people, on the other hand, were in Viken in the midst of the danger, defending the country and holding many battles. Then King Inge sent a letter north to the merchant-town Nidaros, in which were these words: "King Inge Haraldson sends his brother King Sigurd, as also Sadagyrd, Ogmund Svipte, Ottar Birting, and all lendemen, court-men, house-people, and all the public, rich and poor, young and old, his own and God's salutation. The misfortune is known to all men that on account of our childhoods—thou being five, and I but three years of age—we can undertake nothing without the counsel of our friends and other good men. Now I and my men think that we stand nearer to the danger and necessity common to us both, than thou and thy friends; therefore make it so that thou, as soon as possible, come to me, and as strong in troops as possible, that we may be assembled to meet whatever may come. He will be our best friend who does all he can that we may be united, and may take an equal part in all things. But if thou refuse, and wilt not come after this message which I send thee in need, as thou hast done before, then thou must expect that I will come against thee with an armament; and let God decide between us; for we are not in a condition to sit here at so great an expense, and with so numerous a body of troops as are necessary here on account of the enemy, and besides many other pressing charges, whilst thou hast half of all the land-tax and other revenues of Norway. Live in the peace of God!"

9. OTTAR BIRTING'S SPEECH.

Then Ottar Birting stood up in the Thing, and first of all answered thus: "This is King Sigurd's reply to his brother King Inge—that God will reward him for his good salutation, and likewise for the trouble and burden which he and his friends have in this kingdom, and in matters of necessity which effect them both. Although now some think there is something sharp in King Inge's message to his brother Sigurd, yet he has in many respects sufficient cause for it. Now I will make known to you my opinion, and we will hear if King Sigurd and the other people of power will agree to it; and it is, that thou, King Sigurd, make thyself ready, with all the people who will follow thee, to defend thy country; and go as strong in men as possible to thy brother King Inge as soon as thou art prepared, in order to assist each other in all things that are for the common good; and may God Almighty strengthen and assist you both! Now, king, we will have thy words."

Peter, a son of Saudaulf, who was afterwards called Peter Byrdarsvein, bore King Sigurd to the Thing. Then the king said, "Ye must know that, if I am to advise, I will go as soon as possible to my brother King Inge." Then others spoke, one after the other; but although each began his speech in his own way, he ended with agreeing to what Ottar Birting had proposed; and it was determined to call together the war-forces, and go to the east part of the country. King Sigurd accordingly went with great armament east to Viken, and there he met his brother King Inge.

10. FALL OF MAGNUS THE BLIND.

The same autumn (A.D. 1139) Sigurd Slembe and Magnus the Blind came from Denmark with thirty ships, manned both with Danes and Northmen. It was near to winter. When the kings heard of this, they set out with their people eastwards to meet them. They met at Hvalar, near Holm the Grey, the day after Martinmas, which was a Sunday. King Inge and King Sigurd had twenty ships, which were all large. There was a great battle; but, after the first assault, the Danes fled home to Denmark with eighteen ships. On this Sigurd's and Magnus's ships were cleared; and as the last was almost entirely bare of men, and Magnus was lying in his bed, Hreidar Griotgardson, who had long followed him, and been his courtman, took King Magnus in his arms, and tried to run with him on board some other ship. But Hreidar was struck by a spear, which went between his shoulders; and people say King Magnus

was killed by the same spear. Hreidar fell backwards upon the deck, and Magnus upon him; and every man spoke of how honourably he had followed his master and rightful sovereign. Happy are they who have such praise! There fell, on King Magnus's ship, Lodin Sauprud of Linustadar, Bruse Thormodson; and the forecleft-men to Sigurd Slembidjakk, Ivar Kolbeinson and Halvard Faeger, who had been in Sigurd Slembe's fore-hold. This Ivar had been the first who had gone in, in the night, to King Harald, and had laid hands on him. There fell a great number of the men of King Magnus and Sigurd Slembe, for Inge's men let not a single one escape if they got hold of him; but only a few are named here. They killed upon a holm more than forty men, among whom were two Icelanders—the priest Sigurd Berghthorson, a grandson of Mas; the other Clemet, a son of Are Einarson. But three Icelanders obtained their lives: namely, Ivar Skrauthanke, a son of Kalf Range, and who afterwards was bishop of Throndhjem, and was father of the archbishop Eirik. Ivar had always followed King Magnus, and he escaped into his brother Jon Kauda's ship. Jon was married to Cecilia, a daughter of Gyrd Bardson, and was then in King Inge's and Sigurd's armament. There were three in all who escaped on board of Jon's ship. The second was Arnbjorn Ambe, who afterwards married Thorstein's daughter in Audsholt; the third was Ivar Dynta, a son of Stare, but on the mother's side of a Throndhjem family,—a very agreeable man. When the troops came to know that these three were on board his ship, they took their weapons and assaulted the vessel, and some blows were exchanged, and the whole fleet had nearly come to a fight among themselves; but it came to an agreement, so that Jon ransomed his brothers Ivar and Arnbjorn for a fixed sum in ransom, which, however, was afterwards remitted. But Ivar Dynta was taken to the shore, and beheaded; for Sigurd and Gyrd, the sons of Kolbein, would not take any mulct for him, as they knew he had been at their brother Beintein's murder. Ivar the bishop said, that never was there anything that touched him so nearly, as Ivar's going to the shore under the axe, and turning to the others with the wish that they might meet in joy here-after. Gudrid Birger's daughter, a sister of Archbishop Jon, told Eirik Odson that she heard Bishop Ivar say this.

11. SIGURD SLEMBE TAKEN PRISONER.

A man called Thrand Gialdkere was the steersman of King Inge's ship. It was come so far, that Inge's men were rowing in small boats between the ships after those who were swimming in the water, and killed those they could get hold of. Sigurd Slembe threw himself overboard after his ship had lost her crew, stripped off his armour under the water, and then swam with his shield over him. Some men from Thrand's vessel took prisoner a man who was swimming, and were about to kill him; but he begged his life, and offered to tell them where Sigurd Slembe was, and they agreed to it. Shields and spears, dead men, weapons, and clothes, were floating all around on the sea about the ships, "Ye can see," said he, "a red shield floating on the water; he is under it." They rowed to it immediately, took him, and brought him on board of Thrand's ship. Thrand then sent a message to Thjostolf, Ottar, and Amunde. Sigurd Slembe had a tinder box on him; and the tinder was in a walnut-shell, around which there was wax. This is related, because it seems an ingenious way of preserving it from ever getting wet. He swam with a shield over him, because nobody could know one shield from another where so many were floating about; and they would never have hit upon him, if they had not been told where he was. When Thrand came to the land with Sigurd, and it was told to the troops that he was taken, the army set up a shout of joy. When Sigurd heard it he said, "Many a bad man will rejoice over my head this day." Then Thjostolf Alason went to where Sigurd was sitting, struck from his head a silk hat with silver fringes, and said, "Why wert thou so impudent, thou son of a slave! to dare to call thyself King Magnus Barefoot's son?"

Sigurd replied, "Presume not to compare my father to a slave; for thy father was of little worth compared to mine."

Hal, a son of the doctor Thorgeir Steinson, King Inge's court-man, was present at this circumstance, and told it to Eirik Odson,

who afterwards wrote these relations in a book, which he called "Hryggjarstykke". In this book is told all concerning Harald Gille and his sons, and Magnus the Blind, and Sigurd Slembidjakk, until their deaths. Eirik was a sensible man, who was long in Norway about that time. Some of his narratives he wrote down from Hakon Mage's account; some were from lendenmen of Harald's sons, who along with his sons were in all this feud, and in all the councils. Eirik names, moreover, several men of understanding and veracity, who told him these accounts, and were so near that they saw or heard all that happened. Something he wrote from what he himself had heard or seen.

12. TORTURE OF SIGURD SLEMBE.

Hal says that the chiefs wished to have Sigurd killed instantly; but the men who were the most cruel, and thought they had injuries to avenge, advised torturing him; and for this they named Beintein's brothers, Sigurd and Gyrd, the sons of Kolbein. Peter Byrdarsvein would also avenge his brother Fin. But the chiefs and the greater part of the people went away. They broke his shin-bones and arms with an axe-hammer. Then they stripped him, and would flay him alive; but when they tried to take off the skin, they could not do it for the gush of blood. They took leather whips and flogged him so long, that the skin was as much taken off as if he had been flayed. Then they stuck a piece of wood in his back until it broke, dragged him to a tree and hanged him; and then cut off his head, and brought the body and head to a heap of stones and buried them there. All acknowledge, both enemies and friends, that no man in Norway, within memory of the living, was more gifted with all perfections, or more experienced, than Sigurd, but in some respects he was an unlucky man. Hal says that he spoke little, and answered only a few, and in single words, under his tortures, although they spoke to him. Hal says further, that he never moved when they tortured him, more than if they were striking a stock or a stone. This Hal alleged as proof that he was a brave hero, who had courage to endure tortures; for he still held his tongue, and never moved from the spot. And farther he says, that he never altered his voice in the least, but spoke with as much ease as if he was sitting at the ale-table; neither speaking higher nor lower, nor in a more tremulous voice than he was used to do. He spoke until he gave up the ghost, and sang between whiles parts of the Psalm-book, and which Hal considered beyond the powers and strength of ordinary men. And the priest who had the church in the neighbourhood let Sigurd's body be transported thither to the church. This priest was a friend of Harald's sons: but when they heard it they were angry at him, had the body carried back to where it had been, and made the priest pay a fine. Sigurd's friends afterwards came from Denmark with a ship for his body, carried it to Alaborg, and interred it in Mary church in that town. So said Dean Ketil, who officiated as priest at Mary church, to Eirik; and that Sigurd was buried there. Thjostolf Alason transported Magnus the Blind's body to Oslo, and buried it in Halvard's church, beside King Sigurd his father. Lodin Sauprud was transported to Tunsberg; but the others of the slain were buried on the spot.

13. EYSTEIN HARALDSON COMES TO NORWAY.

When the kings Sigurd and Inge had ruled over Norway about six years, Eystein, who was a son of Harald Gille, came in spring from Scotland (A.D. 1142). Arne Sturla, Thorleif Brynjolfson, and Kolbein Hruga had sailed westward over the sea after Eystein, accompanied him to Norway, and sailed immediately with him to Throndhjem. The Throndhjem people received him well; and at the Eyra-thing of Ascension-day he was chosen king, so that he should have the third part of Norway with his brothers Sigurd and Inge. They were at this time in the east part of the country; and men went between the kings who brought about a peace, and that Eystein should have a third part of the kingdom. People believed what he said of his paternal descent, because King Harald himself had testified to it, and he did not resort to the ordeal of iron. King Eystein's mother was called Bjadok, and she followed him to Norway. Magnus was the name of King Harald Gille's fourth son,

who was fostered by Kyrpingaorm. He also was chosen king, and got a fourth part of the country; but Magnus was deformed in his feet, lived but a short time, and died in his bed. Einar Skulason speaks of them:—

The generous Eystein money gave;
Sigurd in fight was quick and brave;
Inge loved well the war-alarm;
Magnus to save his land from harm.
No country boasts a nobler race
The battle-field, or Thing, to grace.
Four brothers of such high pretence
The sun ne'er shone upon at once.

14. MURDER OF OTTAR BIRTING.

After King Harald Gille's death Queen Ingerid married Ottar Birting, who was a lendermen and a great chief, and of a Thronðhem family, who strengthened King Inge's government much while he was in his childhood. King Sigurd was not very friendly to Ottar; because, as he thought, Ottar always took King Inge's side. Ottar Birting was killed north in the merchant town (Nidaros), in an assault upon him in the twilight as he was going to the evening song. When he heard the whistling of the blow he held up his cloak with his hands against it; thinking, no doubt, it was a snowball thrown at him, as young boys do in the streets. Ottar fell by the stroke; but his son, Alf Hrode, who just at the same moment was coming into the churchyard, saw his father's fall, and saw that the man who had killed him ran east about the church. Alf ran after him, and killed him at the corner of the choir; and people said that he had good luck in avenging his father, and afterwards was much more respected than he had been before.

15. BEGINNING OF KING EYSTEIN.

King Eystein Haraldson was in the interior of the Thronðhem district when he heard of Ottar's murder, and summoned to him the bonde-army, with which he proceeded to the town; and he had many men. Ottar's relations and other friends accused King Sigurd, who was in the town, of having instigated this deed; and the bondes were much enraged against him. But the king offered to clear himself by the ordeal of iron, and thereby to establish the truth of his denial; and accordingly a peace was made. King Sigurd went to the south end of the country, and the ordeal was never afterwards heard of.

16. BEGINNING OF ORM THE KING-BROTHER.

Queen Ingerid had a son to Ivar Sneis, and he was called Orm, and got the surname of King-brother. He was a handsome man in appearance, and became a great chief, as shall be told hereafter. Ingerid afterwards married Arne of Stodreim, who was from this called King's-mate; and their children were Inge, Nikolas, Philip of Herdla, and Margaret, who was first married to Bjorn Buk, and afterwards to Simon Karason.

17. JOURNEY OF ERLING SKAKKE AND EARL RAGNVALD.

Kyrpingaorm and Ragnhild, a daughter of Sveinke Steinarson, had a son called Erling. Kyrpingaorm was a son of Svein Sveinsson, who was a son of Erling of Gerd. Otto's mother was Ragna, a daughter of Earl Orm Elifson and Sigrid, a daughter of Earl Fin Arnason. The mother of Earl Orm was Ragnhild, a daughter of Earl Hakon the Great. Erling was a man of understanding, and a great friend of King Inge, by whose assistance and counsel Erling obtained in marriage Christina, a daughter of King Sigurd the Crusader and Queen Malmfrid. Erling possessed a farm at Studla in South Hordaland. Erling left the country; and with him went Eindride Unge and several lendermen, who had chosen men with them. They intended to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and went across the West sea to Orkney. There Earl Ragnvald and Bishop William joined them; and they had in all fifteen ships from Orkney, with which they first sailed to the South Hebrides, from thence west to Valland, and then the same way King Sigurd the Crusader had sailed to Norvasund; and they plundered all around in the heathen part of Spain. Soon after they had sailed through

the Norvasund, Eindride Unge and his followers, with six ships, separated from them; and then each was for himself. Earl Ragnvald and Erling Skakke fell in with a large ship of burden at sea called a dromund, and gave battle to it with nine ships. At last they laid their cutters close under the dromund; but the heathens threw both weapons and stones, and pots full of pitch and boiling oil. Erling laid his ship so close under the dromund, that the missiles of the heathens fell without his ship. Then Erling and his men cut a hole in the dromund, some working below and some above the water-mark; and so they boarded the vessel through it. So says Thorbjorn Skakkaskald, in his poem on Erling:—

The axes of the Northmen hold
A door into the huge ships' hold
Hewed through her high and curved side,
As snug beneath her bulge they ride.
Their spears bring down the astonished foe,
Who cannot see from whence the blow.
The eagle's prey, they, man by man,
Fall by the Northmen's daring plan.

Audunraude, Erling's forecastle-man, was the first man who got into the dromund. Then they carried her, killing an immense number of people; making an extraordinarily valuable booty, and gaining a famous victory. Earl Ragnvald and Erling Skakke came to Palestine in the course of their expedition, and all the way to the river Jordan. From thence they went first to Constantinople, where they left their ships, travelled northwards by land, and arrived in safety in Norway, where their journey was highly praised. Erling Skakke appeared now a much greater man than before, both on account of his journey and of his marriage; besides he was a prudent sensible man, rich, of great family, eloquent, and devoted to King Inge by the strictest friendship more than to the other royal brothers.

18. BIRTH OF HAKON HERDEBREID.

King Sigurd went to a feast east in Viken along with his court, and rode past a house belonging to a great bonde called Simon. While the king was riding past the house, he heard within such beautiful singing that he was quite enchanted with it, and rode up to the house, and saw a lovely girl standing at the handmill and grinding. The king got off his horse, and went to the girl and courted her. When the king went away, the bonde Simon came to know what the object of the king's visit had been. The girl was called Thora, and she was Simon the bonde's servant-girl. Simon took good care of her afterwards, and the girl brought forth a male child (A.D. 1047), who was called Hakon, and was considered King Sigurd's son. Hakon was brought up by Simon Thorbergson and his wife Gunhild. Their own sons also, Onund and Andreas, were brought up with Hakon, and were so dear to him that death only could have parted them.

19. EYSTEIN AND THE PEASANTS OF HISING ISLE.

While King Eystein Haraldson was in Viken, he fell into disputes with the bondes of Reine and the inhabitants of Hising Isle, who assembled to oppose him; but he gave them battle at a place called Leikberg, and afterwards burnt and destroyed all around in Hising; so that the bondes submitted to his will, paid great fines to the king, and he took hostages from them. So says Einar Skulason:—

The Viken men
Won't strive again,
With words or blows,
The king to oppose.
None safety found
On Viken's ground,
Till all, afraid,
Pledge and scat paid.

And further:—

The king came near;
He who is dear
To all good men
Came down the glen,
By Leikberg hill.
They who do ill,
The Reine folk, fly
Or quarter cry.

20. WAR EXPEDITION OF KING HARALDSON.

Soon after King Eystein began his journey out of the country over sea to the West (A.D. 1153), and sailed first to Caithness. Here he heard that Earl Harald Maddad's son was in Thursa, to which he sailed directly in three small boats. The earl had a ship of thirty banks of oars, and nearly eighty men in her. But they were not prepared to make resistance, so that King Eystein was able to board the ship with his men; and he took the earl prisoner, and carried him to his own ship, but the earl ransomed himself with three marks of gold: and thus they parted. Einar Skulason tells of it thus:—

Earl Harald in his stout ship lay
On the bright sand in Thursa bay;
With fourscore men he had no fear,
Nor thought the Norse king was so near,
He who provides the eagle's meals
In three small boats along-shore steals;
And Maddad's son must ransom pay
For his bad outlook that fair day.

From thence King Eystein sailed south along the east side of Scotland, and brought up at a merchant-town in Scotland called Aberdeen, where he killed many people, and plundered the town. So says Einar Skulason:—

At Aberdeen, too, I am told,
Fell many by our Norsemen bold;
Peace was disturbed, and blue swords broke
With many a hard and bloody stroke.

The next battle was at Hartlepool in the south, with a party of horsemen. The king put them to flight, and seized some ships there. So says Einar:—

At Hartlepool, in rank and row,
The king's court-men attack the foe.
The king's sharp sword in blood was red,
Blood dropped from every Norse spear-head.
Ravens rejoice o'er the warm food
Of English slain, each where he stood;
And in the ships their thirst was quenched:
The decks were in the foe's blood drenched.

Then he went southwards to England, and had his third battle at Whitby, and gained the victory, and burnt the town. So says Einar:—

The ring of swords, the clash of shields,
Were loud in Whitby's peaceful fields;
For here the king stirred up the strife.—
Man against man, for death or life.
O'er roof and tower, rose on high
The red wrath-fire in the sky;
House after house the red fiend burns;
By blackened walls the poor man mourns.

Thereafter he plundered wide around in England, where Stephen was then the king. After this King Eystein fought with some cavalry at Skarpasker. So says Einar:—

At Skarpasker the English horse
Retire before the Norse king's force:
The arrow-shower like snow-drift flew,
And the shield-covered foemen slew.

He fought next at Pilavik, and gained the victory. So says Einar:—

At Pilavik the wild wolf feeds,
Well furnished by the king's brave deeds
He poured upon the grass-green plain
A red shower from the Perthmen slain.
On westwards in the sea he urges,
With fire and sword the country purges:
Langtown he burns; the country rang,
For sword on shield incessant clang.

Here they burnt Langatun, a large village; and people say that the town has never since risen to its former condition. After this King Eystein left England in autumn, and returned to Norway. People spoke in various ways about this expedition.

21. OF HARALD'S SONS.

There was good peace maintained in Norway in the first years of the government of Harald's sons; and as long as their old counsellors were alive, there was some kind of unanimity among them. While Inge and Sigurd were in their childhood, they had a court together; but Eystein, who was come to age of discretion, had a court for himself. But when Inge's and Sigurd's counsellors were dead,—namely, Sadagyrð Bardson, Ottar Birting, Amunde Gyrdson, Thjostolf Alason, Ogmund Sviptær, and Ogmund Denger, a brother of Erling Skakke (Erling was not much looked up to while Ogmund lived),—the two kings, Inge and Sigurd divided their courts. King Inge then got great assistance from Gregorius Dagson, a son of Dag Eilifson by Ragnhild a daughter of Skapte Ogmundson. Gregorius had much property, and was himself a thriving, sagacious man. He presided in the governing the country under King Inge, and the king allowed him to manage his property for him according to his own judgment.

22. HABITS AND MANNERS OF HARALD'S SONS.

When King Sigurd grew up he was a very ungovernable, restless man in every way; and so was King Eystein, but Eystein was the more reasonable of the two. King Sigurd was a stout and strong man, of a brisk appearance; he had light brown hair, an ugly mouth; but otherwise a well-shaped countenance. He was polite in his conversation beyond any man, and was expert in all exercises. Einar Skulason speaks of this:—

Sigurd, expert in every way
To wield the sword in bloody fray,
Showed well that to the bold and brave
God always luck and victory gave.
In speech, as well as bloody deeds,
The king all other men exceeds;
And when he speaks we think that none
Has said a word but he alone.

King Eystein was dark and dingy in complexion, of middle height, and a prudent able man; but what deprived him of consideration and popularity with those under him were his avarice and narrowness. He was married to Ragna, a daughter of Nicolas Mase. King Inge was the handsomest among them in countenance. He had yellow but rather thin hair, which was much curled. His stature was small; and he had difficulty in walking alone, because he had one foot withered, and he had a hump both on his back and his breast. He was of cheerful conversation, and friendly towards his friends; was generous, and allowed other chiefs to give him counsel in governing the country. He was popular, therefore, with the public; and all this brought the kingdom and the mass of the people on his side. King Harald Gille's daughter Brigida was first married to the Swedish king Inge Halsteinson, and afterwards to Earl Karl Sonason, and then to the Swedish king Magnus. She and King Inge Haraldson were cousins by the mother's side. At last Brigida married Earl Birger Brose, and they had four sons, namely, Earl Philip, Earl Knut, Folke, and Magnus. Their daughters were Ingegerd, who was married to the Swedish king Sorkver, and their son was King Jon; a second daughter was called Kristin, and a third Margaret. Harald Gille's second daughter was called Maria, who was married to Simon Skalp, a son of Halkel Huk; and their son was called Nikolas. King Harald Gille's third daughter was called Margaret, who was married to Jon Halkelson, a brother of Simon. Now many things occurred between the brothers which occasioned differences and disputes; but I will only relate what appears to me to have produced the more important events.

23. CARDINAL NIKOLAS COMES TO THE COUNTRY.

In the days of Harald's sons Cardinal Nikolas came from Rome to Norway, being sent there by the pope. The cardinal had taken offence at the brothers Sigurd and Eystein, and they were obliged to come to a reconciliation with him; but, on the other hand, he stood on the most affectionate terms with King Inge, whom he called his son. Now when they were all reconciled with him, he moved them to let Jon Birgeron be consecrated archbishop of Thron-

hjem and gave him a vestment which is called a pallium; and settled moreover that the archbishop's seat should be in Nidaros, in Christ church, where King Olaf the Saint reposes. Before that time there had only been common bishops in Norway. The cardinal introduced also the law, that no man should go unpunished who appeared with arms in the merchant-town, excepting the twelve men who were in attendance on the king. He improved many of the customs of the Northmen while he was in the country. There never came a foreigner to Norway whom all men respected so highly, or who could govern the people so well as he did. After some time he returned to the South with many friendly presents, and declared ever afterwards that he was the greatest friend of the people of Norway. When he came south to Rome the former pope died suddenly, and all the people of Rome would have Cardinal Nikolas for pope, and he was consecrated under the name of Adrian; and according to the report of men who went to Rome in his days, he had never any business, however important, to settle with other people, but he would break it off to speak with the Northmen who desired to see him. He was not long pope, and is now considered a saint.

24. MIRACLE OF KING OLAF.

In the time of Harald Gille's sons, it happened that a man called Haldor fell into the hands of the Vindland people, who took him and mutilated him, cut open his neck, took out the tongue through the opening, and cut out his tongue root. He afterwards sought out the holy King Olaf, fixed his mind entirely on the holy man, and weeping besought King Olaf to restore his speech and health. Thereupon he immediately recovered his speech by the good king's compassion, went immediately into his service for all his life, and became an excellent trustworthy man. This miracle took place a fortnight before the last Olafsmas, upon the day that Cardinal Nikolas set foot on the land of Norway.

25. MIRACLES OF KING OLAF ON RICHARD.

In the Uplands were two brothers, men of great family, and men of fortune, Einar and Andres, sons of Guthorm Grabard, and brothers of King Sigurd Haraldson's mother; and they had great properties and udal estates in that quarter. They had a sister who was very handsome, but did not pay sufficient regard to the scandal of evil persons, as it afterwards appeared. She was on a friendly footing with an English priest called Richard, who had a welcome to the house of her brothers, and on account of their friendship for him she did many things to please him, and often to his advantage; but the end of all this was, that an ugly report flew about concerning this girl. When this came into the mouth of the public all men threw the blame on the priest. Her brothers did the same, and expressed publicly, as soon as they observed it, that they laid the blame most on him. The great friendship that was between the earl and the priest proved a great misfortune to both, which might have been expected, as the brothers were silent about their secret determination, and let nothing be observed. But one day they called the priest to them, who went, expecting nothing but good from them; enticed him from home with them, saying that they intended to go to another district, where they had some needful business, and inviting him to go with them. They had with them a farm-servant who knew their purpose. They went in a boat along the shore of a lake which is called Rands lake, and landed at a ness called Skiptisand, where they went on shore and amused themselves awhile. Then they went to a retired place, and commanded their servant-man to strike the priest with an axe-hammer. He struck the priest so hard that he swooned; but when he recovered he said, "Why are ye playing so roughly with me?" They replied, "Although nobody has told thee of it before, thou shalt now find the consequence of what thou hast done." They then upbraided him; but he denied their accusations, and besought God and the holy King Olaf to judge between them. Then they broke his leg-bones, and dragged him bound to the forest with them; and then they put a string around his head, and put a board under his head and shoulders, and made a knot on the string, and bound his head fast to the board. Then the elder brother, Einar, took a wedge, and

put it on the priest's eye, and the servant who stood beside him struck upon it with an axe, so that the eye flew out, and fell upon the board. Then he set the pin upon the other eye, and said to the servant, "Strike now more softly." He did so, and the wedge sprang from the eye-stone, and tore the eyelid loose. Then Einar took up the eyelid in his hand, and saw that the eye-stone was still in its place; and he set the wedge on the cheek, and when the servant struck it the eye-stone sprang out upon the cheek-bone. Thereafter they opened his mouth, took his tongue and cut it off, and then untied his hands and his head. As soon as he came to himself, he thought of laying the eye-stones in their place under the eyelids, and pressing then with both hands as much as he could. Then they carried him on board, and went to a farm called Saheimrud, where they landed. They sent up to the farm to say that a priest was lying in the boat at the shore. While the message was going to the farm, they asked the priest if he could talk; and he made a noise and attempted to speak. Then said Einar to his brother, "If he recover and the stump of his tongue grow, I am afraid he will get his speech again." Thereupon they seized the stump with a pair of tongs, drew it out, cut it twice, and the third time to the very roots, and left him lying half dead. The housewife in the farm was poor; but she hastened to the place with her daughter, and they carried the priest home to their farm in their cloaks. They then brought a priest, and when he arrived he bound all his wounds; and they attended to his comfort as much as they were able. And thus lay the wounded priest grievously handled, but trusting always to God's grace, and never doubting; and although he was speechless, he prayed to God in thought with a sorrowful mind, but with the more confidence the worse he was. He turned his thoughts also to the mild King Olaf the Saint, God's dear favourite, of whose excellent deeds he had heard so much told, and trusted so much more zealously on him with all his heart for help in his necessity. As he lay there lame, and deprived of all strength, he wept bitterly, moaned, and prayed with a sore heart that the dear King Olaf would help him. Now when this wounded priest was sleeping after midnight, he thought he saw a gallant man coming to him, who spoke these words, "Thou art ill off, friend Richard, and thy strength is little." He thought he replied to this assentingly. Then the man accosted him again, "Thou requirest compassion?" The priest replies, "I need the compassion of Almighty God and the holy King Olaf." He answered, "Thou shalt get it." Thereupon he pulled the tongue-stump so hard that it gave the priest pain; then he stroked with his hands his eyes, and legs, and other wounded members. Then the priest asked who he was. He looked at him, and said, "Olaf, come here from Throndhjem;" and then disappeared. But the priest awoke altogether sound, and thus he spoke: "Happy am I, and thanks be to the Almighty God and the holy King Olaf, who have restored me!" Dreadfully mishandled as he had been, yet so quickly was he restored from his misfortune that he scarcely thought he had been wounded or sick. His tongue was entire; both his eyes were in their places, and were clear-sighted; his broken legs and every other wound were healed, or were free from pain; and, in short, he had got perfect health. But as a proof that his eyes had been punched out, there remained a white scar on each eyelid, in order that this dear king's excellence might be manifest on the man who had been so dreadfully misused.

26. KING INGE AND SIGURD HOLD A THING.

King Eystein and King Sigurd had quarrelled, because King Sigurd had killed King Eystein's court-man Harald, the Viken man, who owned a house in Bergen, and also the priest Jon Tapard, a son of Bjarne Sigurdson. On account of this affair, a conference to settle it was appointed in winter in the Uplands. The two sat together in the conference for a long time, and so much was known of their conference that all three brothers were to meet the following summer in Bergen. It was added, that their conference was to the effect that King Inge should have two or three farms, and as much income as would keep thirty men beside him, as he had not health to be a king. When King Inge and Gregorius heard this report, they came to Bergen with many followers. King Sigurd

arrived there a little later, and was not nearly so strong in men. Sigurd and Inge had then been nineteen years kings of Norway (A.D. 1155). King Eystein came later still from the south than the other two from the north. Then King Inge ordered the Thing to be called together on the holm by the sound of trumpet; and Sigurd and Inge came to it with a great many people. Gregorius had two long-ships, and at the least ninety men, whom he kept in provisions. He kept his house-men better than other lendemen; for he never took part in any entertainment where each guest brings his liquor, without having all his house-men to drink with him. He went now to the Thing in a gold-mounted helmet, and all his men had helmets on. Then King Inge stood up, and told the assembly what he had heard; how his brothers were going to use him, and depose him from his kingdom; and asked for their assistance. The assembled people made a good return to his speech, and declared they would follow him.

27. OF GREGORIUS DAGSON.

Then King Sigurd stood up and said it was a false accusation that King Inge had made against him and his brother, and insisted that Gregorius had invented it; and insinuated that it would not be long, if he had his will, before they should meet so that the golden helmet should be doffed; and ended his speech by hinting that they could not both live. Gregorius replied, that Sigurd need not long so much for this, as he was ready now, if it must be so. A few days after, one of Gregorius's house-men was killed out upon the street, and it was Sigurd's house-men who killed him. Gregorius would then have fallen upon King Sigurd and his people; but King Inge, and many others, kept him back. But one evening, just as Queen Ingerid, King Inge's mother, was coming from vespers, she came past where Sigurd Skrudhryna, a courtman of King Inge, lay murdered. He was then an old man, and had served many kings. King Sigurd's courtmen, Halyard Gunnarson, and Sigurd, a son of Eystein Trafale, had killed him; and people suspected it was done by order of King Sigurd. She went immediately to King Inge, and told him he would be a little king if he took no concern, but allowed his court-men to be killed, the one after the other, like swine. The king was angry at her speech; and while they were scolding about it, came Gregorius in helmet and armour, and told the king not to be angry, for she was only saying the truth. "And I am now," says he, "come to thy assistance, if thou wilt attack King Sigurd; and here we are, above 100 men in helmets and armour, and with them we will attack where others think the attack may be worst." But the most dissuaded from this course, thinking that Sigurd would pay the mulct for the slaughter done. Now when Gregorius saw that there would be no assault, he accosted King Inge thus: "Thou wilt frighten thy men from thee in this way; for first they lately killed my house-man, and now thy court-man, and afterwards they will chase me, or some other of thy lendenmen whom thou wouldst feel the loss of, when they see that thou art indifferent about such things; and at last, after thy friends are killed, they will take the royal dignity from thee. Whatever thy other lendenmen may do, I will not stay here longer to be slaughtered like an ox; but Sigurd the king and I have a business to settle with each other to-night, in whatever way it may turn out. It is true that there is but little help in thee on account of thy ill health, but I should think thy will should not be less to hold thy hand over thy friends, and I am now quite ready to go from hence to meet Sigurd, and my banner is flying in the yard."

Then King Inge stood up, and called for his arms, and ordered every man who wished to follow him to get ready, declaring it was of no use to try to dissuade him; for he had long enough avoided this, but now steel must determine between them.

28. OF KING SIGURD'S FALL.

King Sigurd sat and drank in Sigrid Saeta's house ready for battle, although people thought it would not come to an assault at all. Then came King Inge with his men down the road from the smithy shops, against the house. Arne, the king's brother-in-law, came out from the Sand-bridge, Aslak Erlendson from his own house, and Gregorius from the street where all thought the assault would be worst. King Sigurd and his men made many shots from the

holes in the loft, broke down the fireplaces, and threw stones on them. Gregorius and his men cut down the gates of the yard; and there in the port fell Einar, a son of Laxapaul, who was of Sigurd's people, together with Halvard Gunnarson, who was shot in a loft, and nobody lamented his death. They hewed down the houses, and many of King Sigurd's men left him, and surrendered for quarter. Then King Sigurd went up into a loft, and desired to be heard. He had a gilt shield, by which they knew him, but they would not listen to him, and shot arrows at him as thick as snow in a snow-shower, so that he could not stay there. As his men had now left him, and the houses were being hewn down, he went out from thence, and with him his court-man Thord Husfreyja from Viken. They wanted to come where King Inge was to be found, and Sigurd called to his brother King Inge, and begged him to grant him life and safety; but both Thord and Sigurd were instantly killed, and Thord fell with great glory. King Sigurd was interred in the old Christ church out on the holm. King Inge gave Gregorius the ship King Sigurd had owned. There fell many of King Sigurd's and King Inge's men, although I only name a few; but of Gregorius's men there fell four; and also some who belonged to no party, but were shot on the piers, or out in the ships. It was fought on a Friday, and fourteen days before Saint John the Baptist's day (June 10, 1155). Two or three days after King Eystein came from the eastward with thirty ships, and had along with him his brother's son Hakon, a son of King Sigurd. Eystein did not come up to the town, but lay in Floruvagar, and good men went between to get a reconciliation made. But Gregorius wanted that they should go out against him, thinking there never would be a better opportunity; and offered to be himself the leader. "For thou, king, shalt not go, for we have no want of men." But many dissuaded from this course, and it came to nothing. King Eystein returned back to Viken, and King Inge to Throndhjem, and they were in a sort reconciled; but they did not meet each other.

29. OF GREGORIUS DAGSON.

Somewhat later than King Eystein, Gregorius Dagson also set out to the eastward and came to his farm Bratsberg in Hofund; but King Eystein was up in the fjord at Oslo, and had his ships drawn above two miles over the frozen sea, for there was much ice at that time in Viken. King Eystein went up to Hofund to take Gregorius; but he got news of what was on foot, and escaped to Thelemark with ninety men, from thence over the mountains, and came down in Hardanger; and at last to Studla in Etne, to Erling Skakke's farm. Erling himself had gone north to Bergen; but his wife Kristin, a daughter of King Sigurd, was at home, and offered Gregorius all the assistance he wanted; and he was hospitably received. He got a long-ship there which belonged to Erling, and everything else he required. Gregorius thanked her kindly, and allowed that she had behaved nobly, and as might have been expected of her. Gregorius then proceeded to Bergen, where he met Erling, who thought also that his wife had done well.

30. RECONCILIATION OF EYSTEIN AND INGE.

Then Gregorius went north to Throndhjem, and came there before Yule. King Inge was rejoiced at his safety, and told him to use his property as freely as his own, King Eystein having burnt Gregorius's house, and slaughtered his stock of cattle. The ship-docks which King Eystein the Elder had constructed in the merchant town of Nidaros, and which had been exceedingly expensive, were also burnt this winter, together with some good vessels belonging to King Inge. This deed was ascribed to King Eystein and Philip Gyrdson, King Sigurd's foster-brother, and occasioned much displeasure and hatred. The following summer King Inge went south with a very numerous body of men; and King Eystein came northwards, gathering men also. They met in the east (A.D. 1156) at the Seleys, near to the Naze; but King Inge was by far the strongest in men. It was nearly coming to a battle; but at last they were reconciled on these conditions, that King Eystein should be bound to pay forty-five marks of gold, of which King Inge should have thirty marks, because King Eystein had occasioned the burning of the docks and ships; and, besides, that Philip, and all who

had been accomplices in the deed, should be outlawed. Also that the men should be banished the country, against whom it could be proved that they gave blow or wound to King Sigurd; for King Eystein accused King Inge of protecting these men; and that Gregorius should have fifteen marks of gold for the value of his property burnt by King Eystein. King Eystein was ill pleased with these terms, and looked upon the treaty as one forced upon him. From that meeting King Inge went eastward to Viken, and King Eystein north to Throndhjem; and they had no intercourse with each other, nor were the messages which passed between them very friendly, and on both sides they killed each other's friends. King Eystein, besides, did not pay the money; and the one accused the other of not fulfilling what was promised. King Inge and Gregorius enticed many people from King Eystein; among others, Bard Standale Brynjolfson, Simon Skalp, a son of Halkel Huk, Halder Brynjolfson, Jon Halkelson, and many other lendermen.

31. OF EYSTEIN AND INGE.

Two years after King Sigurd's fall (A.D. 1157) both kings assembled armaments; namely, King Inge in the east of the country, where he collected eighty ships; and King Eystein in the north, where he had forty-five, and among these the Great Dragon, which King Eystein Magnuson had built after the Long Serpent; and they had on both sides many and excellent troops. King Inge lay with his ships south at Moster Isle, and King Eystein a little to the north in Graeningasund. King Eystein sent the young Aslak Jonson, and Arne Sturla, a son of Snaebjorn, with one ship to meet King Inge; but when the king's men knew them, they assaulted them, killed many of their people, and took all that was in the ship belonging to them. Aslak and Arne and a few more escaped to the land, went to King Eystein, and told him how King Inge had received them. Thereupon King Eystein held a House-thing, and told his followers how ill King Inge had treated his men, and desired the troops to follow him. "I have," said he, "so many, and such excellent men, that I have no intention to fly, if ye will follow me." But this speech was not received with much favour. Halkel Huk was there; but both his sons, Simon and Jon, were with King Inge. Halkel replied, so loud that many heard him, "Let thy chests of gold follow thee, and let them defend thy land."

32. KING EYSTEIN'S DEATH.

In the night many of King Eystein's ships rowed secretly away, some of them joining King Inge, some going to Bergen, or up into the fjords; so that when it was daylight in the morning the king was lying behind with only ten ships. Then he left the Great Dragon, which was heavy to row, and several other vessels behind; and cut and destroyed the Dragon, started out the ale, and destroyed all that they could not take with them. King Eystein went on board of the ship of Eindride, a son of Jon Morner, sailed north into Sogn, and then took the land-road eastwards to Viken. King Inge took the vessels, and sailed with them outside of the isles to Viken. King Eystein had then got east as far as Fold, and had with him 1200 men; but when they saw King Inge's force, they did not think themselves sufficiently strong to oppose him, and they retired to the forest. Every one fled his own way, so that the king was left with but one man. King Inge and his men observed King Eystein's flight, and also that he had but few people with him, and they went immediately to search for him. Simon Skalp met the king just as he was coming out of a willow bush. Simon saluted him. "God save you, sire," said he.

The king replied, "I do not know if thou art not sire here."

Simon replied, "That is as it may happen."

The king begged him to conceal him, and said it was proper to do so. "For there was long friendship between us, although it has now gone differently."

Simon replied, it could not be.

Then the king begged that he might hear mass before he died, which accordingly took place. Then Eystein laid himself down on his face on the grass, stretched out his hands on each side, and told them to cut the sign of the cross between his shoulders, and see whether he could not bear steel as King Inge's followers had

asserted of him. Simon told the man who had to put the king to death to do so immediately, for the king had been creeping about upon the grass long enough. He was accordingly slain, and he appears to have suffered manfully. His body was carried to Fors, and lay all night under the hill at the south side of the church. King Eystein was buried in Fors church, and his grave is in the middle of the church-floor, where a fringed canopy is spread over it, and he is considered a saint. Where he was executed, and his blood ran upon the ground, sprang up a fountain, and another under the hill where his body lay all night. From both these waters many think they have received a cure of sickness and pain. It is reported by the Viken people that many miracles were wrought at King Eystein's grave, until his enemies poured upon it soup made of boiled dog's flesh. Simon Skalp was much hated for this deed, which was generally ascribed to him; but some said that when King Eystein was taken Simon sent a message to King Inge, and the king commanded that King Eystein should not come before his face. So King Sverre has caused it to be written; but Einar Skulason tells of it thus:—

Simon Skalp, the traitor bold,
For deeds of murder known of old,
His king betrayed; and ne'er will he
God's blessed face hereafter see.

SAGA OF HAKON HERDEBREID (HAKON THE BROAD-SHOULDERED)

1. BEGINNING OF HAKON HERDEBREID.

Hakon, King Sigurd's son, was chosen chief of the troop which had followed King Eystein, and his adherents gave him the title of king. He was ten years old. At that time he had with him Sigurd, a son of Halvard Hauld of Reyrr, and Andreas and Onund, the sons of Simon, his foster-brothers, and many chiefs, friends of King Sigurd and King Eystein; and they went first up to Gautland. King Inge took possession of all the estates they had left behind, and declared them banished. Thereafter King Inge went to Viken, and was sometimes also in the north of the country. Gregorius Dagson was in Konungahella, where the danger was greatest, and had beside him a strong and handsome body of men, with which he defended the country.

2. OF GREGORIUS DAGSON.

The summer after (A.D. 1158) Hakon came with his men, and proceeded to Konungahella with a numerous and handsome troop. Gregorius was then in the town, and summoned the bondes and townspeople to a great Thing, at which he desired their aid; but he thought the people did not hear him with much favour, so he did not much trust them. Gregorius set off with two ships to Viken, and was very much cast down. He expected to meet King Inge there, having heard he was coming with a great army to Viken. Now when Gregorius had come but a short way north he met Simon Skalp, Haldor Brynjolfson, and Gyrd Amundason, King Inge's foster-brothers. Gregorius was much delighted at this meeting, and turned back with them, being all in one body, with eleven ships. As they were rowing up to Konungahella, Hakon, with his followers, was holding a Thing without the town, and saw their approach; and Sigurd of Reyrr said, "Gregorius must be fey to be throwing himself with so few men into our hands." Gregorius landed opposite the town to wait for King Inge, for he was expected, but he did not come. King Hakon put himself in order in the town, and appointed Thorliot Skaufaskalle, who was a viking and a robber, to be captain of the men in the merchant ships that were afloat in the river; and King Hakon and Sigurd were within the town, and drew up the men on the piers, for all the townspeople had submitted to King Hakon.

3. KING HAKON'S FLIGHT.

Gregorius rowed up the river, and let the ship drive down with the stream against Thorliot. They shot at each other a while, until Thorliot and his comrades jumped overboard; and some of them were killed, some escaped to the land. Then Gregorius rowed to

the piers, and let a gangway be cast on shore at the very feet of Hakon's men. There the man who carried his banner was slain, just as he was going to step on shore. Gregorius ordered Hal, a son of Audun Halson, to take up the banner, which he did, and bore the banner up to the pier. Gregorius followed close after him, held his shield over his head, and protected him as well as himself. As soon as Gregorius came upon the pier, and Hakon's men knew him, they gave way, and made room for him on every side. Afterwards more people landed from the ships, and then Gregorius made a severe assault with his men; and Hakon's men first moved back, and then ran up into the town. Gregorius pursued them eagerly, drove them twice from the town, and killed many of them. By the report of all men, never was there so glorious an affair as this of Gregorius; for Hakon had more than 4000 men, and Gregorius not full 400. After the battle, Gregorius said to Hal Audunson, "Many men, in my opinion, are more agile in battle than ye Icelanders are, for ye are not so exercised as ye Norwegians; but none, I think, are so bold under arms as ye are." King Inge came up soon after, and killed many of the men who had taken part with Hakon; made some pay heavy fines, burnt the houses of some, and some he drove out of the country, or treated otherwise very ill. Hakon fled at first up to Gautland with all his men; but the winter after (A.D. 1159), he proceeded by the upper road to Throndhjem, and came there before Easter. The Throndhjem people received him well, for they had always served under that shield. It is said that the Throndhjem people took Hakon as king, on the terms that he should have from Inge the third part of Norway as his paternal heritage. King Inge and Gregorius were in Viken, and Gregorius wanted to make an expedition against the party in the north; but it came to nothing that winter, as many dissuaded from it.

4. FALL OF GYRD AND HAVARD.

King Hakon left Throndhjem in spring with thirty ships nearly; and some of his men sailed before the rest with seven ships, and plundered in North and South More. No man could remember that there ever before had been plundering between the two towns (Bergen and Nidaros). Jon the son of Halkel Huk collected the bondes in arms, and proceeded against them; took Kolbein Ode prisoner, killed every woman's son of them in his ship. Then they searched for the others, found them all assembled in seven ships, and fought with them; but his father Halkel not coming to his assistance as he had promised, many good bondes were killed, and Jon himself was wounded. Hakon proceeded south to Bergen with his forces; but when he came to Stjornvelta, he heard that King Inge and Gregorius had arrived a few nights before from the east at Bergen, and therefore he did not venture to steer thither. They sailed the outer course southwards past Bergen, and met three ships of King Inge's fleet, which had been outsailed on the voyage from the east. On board of them were Gyrd Amundason, King Inge's foster-brother, who was married to Gyrid a sister of Gregorius, and also lagman Gyrd Gunhildson, and Havard Klining. King Hakon had Gyrd Amundason and Havard Klining put to death; but took lagman Gyrd southwards, and then proceeded east to Viken.

5. OF THE CONSULTATIONS OF KING INGE.

When King Inge heard of this he sailed east after them, and they met east in the Gaut river. King Inge went up the north arm of the river, and sent out spies to get news of Hakon and his fleet; but he himself landed at Hising, and waited for his spies. Now when the spies came back they went to the king, and said that they had seen King Hakon's forces, and all his ships which lay at the stakes in the river, and Hakon's men had bound the stems of their vessels to them. They had two great East-country trading vessels, which they had laid outside of the fleet, and on both these were built high wooded stages (castles). When King Inge heard the preparations they had made, he ordered a trumpet to call a House-thing of all the men; and when the Thing was seated he asked his men for counsel, and applied particularly to Gregorius Dagson, his brother-in-law Erling Skakke, and other lendersmen and ship-commanders, to whom he related the preparations of Hakon and

his men.

Then Gregorius Dagson replied first, and made known his mind in the following words:—"Sometimes we and Hakon have met, and generally they had the most people; but, notwithstanding, they fell short in battle against us. Now, on the other hand, we have by far the greatest force; and it will appear probable to the men who a short time ago lost gallant relations by them, that this will be a good occasion to get vengeance, for they have fled before us the greater part of the summer; and we have often said that if they waited for us, as appears now to be the case, we would have a brush with them. Now I will tell my opinion, which is, that I will engage them, if it be agreeable to the king's pleasure; for I think it will go now as formerly, that they must give way before us if we attack them bravely; and I shall always attack where others may think it most difficult."

The speech was received with much applause, and all declared they were ready to engage in battle against Hakon. Then they rowed with all the ships up the river, until they came in sight of each other, and then King Inge turned off from the river current under the island. Now the king addressed the lendersmen again, and told them to get ready for battle. He turned himself especially to Erling Skakke, and said, what was true, that no man in the army had more understanding and knowledge in fighting battles, although some were more hot. The king then addressed himself to several of the lendersmen, speaking to them by name; and ended by desiring that each man should make his attack where he thought it would be of advantage, and thereafter all would act together.

6. ERLING'S SPEECH.

Erling Skakke replied thus to the king's speech: "It is my duty, sire, not to be silent; and I shall give my advice, since it is desired. The resolution now adopted is contrary to my judgment; for I call it foolhardy to fight under these circumstances, although we have so many and such fine men. Supposing we make an attack on them, and row up against this river-current; then one of the three men who are in each half room must be employed in rowing only, and another must be covering with the shield the man who rows; and what have we then to fight with but one third of our men? It appears to me that they can be of little use in the battle who are sitting at their oars with their backs turned to the enemy. Give me now some time for consideration, and I promise you that before three days are over I shall fall upon some plan by which we can come into battle with advantage."

It was evident from Erling's speech that he dissuaded from an attack; but, notwithstanding, it was urged by many who thought that Hakon would now, as before, take to the land. "And then," said they, "we cannot get hold of him; but now they have but few men, and we have their fate in our own hands."

Gregorius said but little; but thought that Erling rather dissuaded from an attack that Gregorius's advice should have no effect, than that he had any better advice to give.

7. OF HAKON'S FLEET.

Then said King Inge to Erling, "Now we will follow thy advice, brother, with regard to the manner of attacking; but seeing how eager our counsellors are for it, we shall make the attack this day."

Erling replied, "All the boats and light vessels we have should row outside the island, and up the east arm of the river, and then down with the stream upon them, and try if they cannot cut them loose from the piles. Then we, with the large ships, shall row from below here against them; and I cannot tell until it be tried, if those who are now so furiously warm will be much brisker at the attack than I am."

This counsel was approved by all. There was a ness stretched out between their fleet and Hakon's, so that they could not see each other. Now when Hakon and his men, who had taken counsel with each other in a meeting, saw the boat-squadron rowing down the river, some thought King Inge intended to give them battle; but many believed they did not dare, for it looked as if the attack was given up; and they, besides, were very confident, both in their preparations and men. There were many great people

with Hakon: there were Sigurd of Rey, and Simon's sons; Nikolas Skialdvarson; Eindride, a son of Jon Mornef, who was the most gallant and popular man in the Thordhjem country; and many other lendemen and warriors. Now when they saw that King Inge's men with many ships were rowing out of the river, Hakon and his men believed they were going to fly; and therefore they cut their land-ropes with which they lay fast at the piles, seized their oars, and rowed after them in pursuit. The ships ran fast down with the stream; but when they came further down the river, abreast of the ness, they saw King Inge's main strength lying quiet at the island Hising. King Inge's people saw Hakon's ships under way, and believed they were coming to attack them; and now there was great bustle and clash of arms, and they encouraged each other by a great war-shout. Hakon with his fleet turned northwards a little to the land, where there was a turn in the bight of the river, and where there was no current. They made ready for battle, carried land-ropes to the shore, turned the stems of their ships outwards, and bound them all together. They laid the large East-country traders without the other vessels, the one above, the other below, and bound them to the long-ships. In the middle of the fleet lay the king's ship, and next to it Sigurd's; and on the other side of the king's ship lay Nikolas, and next to him Eindride Jonson. All the smaller ships lay farther off, and they were all nearly loaded with weapons and stones.

8. SIGURD OF REYR'S SPEECH.

Then Sigurd of Rey made the following speech: "Now there is hope that the time is come which has been promised us all the summer, that we shall meet King Inge in battle. We have long prepared ourselves for this; and many of our comrades have boasted that they would never fly from or submit to King Inge and Gregorius, and now let them remember their words. But we who have sometimes got the toothache in our conflicts with them, speak less confidently; for it has happened, as all have heard, that we very often have come off without glory. But, nevertheless, it is now necessary to fight manfully, and stand to it with steadiness; for the only escape for us is in victory. Although we have somewhat fewer men than they, yet luck determines which side shall have the advantage, and God knows that the right is on our side. Inge has killed two of his brothers; and it is obvious to all men that the mulct he intends to pay King Hakon for his father's murder is to murder him also, as well as his other relations, which will be seen this day to be his intent. King Hakon desired from the beginning no more of Norway than the third part, which his father had possessed, and which was denied him; and yet, in my opinion, King Hakon has a better right to inherit after his father's brother, King Eystein, than Inge or Simon Skalp, or the other men who killed King Eystein. Many of them who would save their souls, and yet have defiled their hands with such bloody deeds as Inge has done, must think it a presumption before God that he takes the name of king; and I wonder God suffers such monstrous wickedness as his; but it may be God's will that we shall now put him down. Let us fight then manfully, and God will give us victory; and, if we fall, will repay us with joys unspeakable for now allowing the might of the wicked to prevail over us. Go forth then in confidence, and be not afraid when the battle begins. Let each watch over his own and his comrade's safety, and God protect us all." There went a good report abroad of this speech of Sigurd, and all promised fairly, and to do their duty. King Hakon went on board of the great East-country ship, and a shield-bulwark was made around him; but his standard remained on the long-ship in which it had been before.

9. OF KING INGE'S MEN.

Now must we tell about King Inge and his men. When they saw that King Hakon and his people were ready for battle, and the river only was between them, they sent a light vessel to recall the rest of the fleet which had rowed away; and in the meantime the king waited for them, and arranged the troops for the attack. Then the chiefs consulted in presence of the army, and told their opinions; first, which ships should lie nearest to the enemy; and then where each should attack.

Gregorius spoke thus: "We have many and fine men; and it is my advice, King Inge, that you do not go to the assault with us, for everything is preserved if you are safe. And no man knows where an arrow may hit, even from the hands of a bad bowman; and they have prepared themselves so, that missiles and stones can be thrown from the high stages upon the merchant ships, so that there is less danger for those who are farthest from them. They have not more men than we lendemen can very well engage with. I shall lay my ship alongside their largest ship, and I expect the conflict between us will be but short; for it has often been so in our former meetings, although there has been a much greater want of men with us than now." All thought well of the advice that the king himself should not take part in the battle.

Then Erling Skakke said, "I agree also to the counsel that you, sire, should not go into the battle. It appears to me that their preparations are such, that we require all our precaution not to suffer a great defeat from them; and whole limbs are the easiest cured. In the council we held before to-day many opposed what I said, and ye said then that I did not want to fight; but now I think the business has altered its appearance, and greatly to our advantage, since they have hauled off from the piles, and now it stands so that I do not dissuade from giving battle; for I see, what all are sensible of, how necessary it is to put an end to this robber band who have gone over the whole country with pillage and destruction, in order that people may cultivate the land in peace, and serve a king so good and just as King Inge who has long had trouble and anxiety from the haughty unquiet spirit of his relations, although he has been a shield of defence for the whole people, and has been exposed to manifold perils for the peace of the country." Erling spoke well and long, and many other chiefs also; and all to the same purpose—all urging to battle. In the meantime they waited until all the fleet should be assembled. King Inge had the ship Baekisudin; and, at the entreaty of his friends, he did not join the battle, but lay still at the island.

10. BEGINNING OF THE BATTLE.

When the army was ready they rowed briskly against the enemy, and both sides raised a war-shout. Inge's men did not bind their ships together, but let them be loose; for they rowed right across the current, by which the large ships were much swayed. Erling Skakke laid his ship beside King Hakon's ship, and ran the stem between his and Sigurd's ship, by which the battle began. But Gregorius's ship swung upon the ground, and heeled very much over, so that at first she could not come into the battle; and when Hakon's men saw this they laid themselves against her, and attacked Gregorius's ship on all sides. Ivar, Hakon Mage's son, laid his ship so that the stems struck together; and he got a boat-hook fastened on Gregorius, on that part of his body where the waist is smallest, and dragged him to him, by which Gregorius stumbled against the ship's rails; but the hook slipped to one side, or Gregorius would have been dragged over-board. Gregorius, however, was but little wounded, for he had on a plate coat of armour. Ivar called out to him, that he had a "thick bark." Gregorius replied, that if Ivar went on so he would "require it all, and not have too much." It was very near then that Gregorius and his men had sprung overboard; but Aslak Unge threw an anchor into their ship, and dragged them off the ground. Then Gregorius laid himself against Ivar's ship, and they fought a long while; but Gregorius's ship being both higher sided and more strongly manned, many people fell in Ivar's ship, and some jumped overboard. Ivar was so severely wounded that he could not take part in the fight. When his ship was cleared of the men, Gregorius let Ivar be carried to the shore, so that he might escape; and from that time they were constant friends.

11. KING HAKON'S FLIGHT.

When King Inge and his men saw that Gregorius was aground, he encouraged his crew to row to his assistance. "It was," he said, "the most imprudent advice that we should remain lying here, while our friends are in battle; for we have the largest and best ship in all the fleet. But now I see that Gregorius, the man to whom I owe the most, is in need of help; so we must hasten to the fight

where it is sharpest. It is also most proper that I should be in the battle; for the victory, if we win it, will belong to me. And if I even knew beforehand that our men were not to gain the battle, yet our place is where our friends are; for I can do nothing if I lose the men who are justly called the defence of the country, who are the bravest, and have long ruled for me and my kingdom." Thereupon he ordered his banner to be set up, which was done; and they rowed across the river. Then the battle raged, and the king could not get room to attack, so close lay the ships before him. First he lay under the East-country trading ship, and from it they threw down upon his vessel spears, iron-shod stakes, and such large stones that it was impossible to hold out longer there, and he had to haul off. Now when the king's people saw that he was come they made place for him, and then he laid alongside of Eindride Jonson's ship. Now King Hakon's men abandoned the small ships, and went on board the large merchant vessels; but some of them sprang on shore. Erling Skakke and his men had a severe conflict. Erling himself was on the forecastle, and called his forecastle-men, and ordered them to board the king's ship; but they answered, this was no easy matter, for there were beams above with an iron comb on them. Then Erling himself went to the bow, and stayed there a while, until they succeeded in getting on board the king's ship; and then the ship was cleared of men on the bows, and the whole army gave way. Many sprang into the water, many fell, but the greater number got to the land. So says Einar Skulason:—

Men fall upon the slippery deck—
Men roll off from the blood-drenched wreck;
Dead bodies float down with the stream,
And from the shores witch-ravens scream.
The cold blue river now runs red
With the warm blood of warriors dead,
And stains the waves in Karmt Sound
With the last drops of the death-wound.
"All down the stream, with unmann'd prow,
Floats many an empty long-ship now,
Ship after ship, shout after shout,
Tell that King Hakon can't hold out.
The bowmen ply their bows of elm,
The red swords flash o'er broken helm:
King Hakon's men rush to the strand,
Out of their ships, up through the land.

Einar composed a song about Gregorius Dagson, which is called the River-song. King Inge granted life and peace to Nikolas Skialdvarson when his ship was deserted, and thereupon he went into King Inge's service, and remained in it as long as the king lived. Eindride Jonson leaped on board of King Inge's ship when his own was cleared of men, and begged for his life. King Inge wished to grant it; but Havard Klining's son ran up, and gave him a mortal wound, which was much blamed; but he said Eindride had been the cause of his father's death. There was much lamentation at Eindride's death, but principally in the Throndhjem district. Many of Hakon's people fell here, but not many chiefs. Few of King Inge's people fell, but many were wounded. King Hakon fled up the country, and King Inge went north to Viken with his troops; and he, as well as Gregorius, remained in Viken all winter (A.D. 1160). When King Inge's men, Bergliot and his brothers, sons of Ivar of Elda, came from the battle to Bergen, they slew Nickolas Skeg, who had been Hakon's treasurer, and then went north to Throndhjem.

King Hakon came north before Yule, and Sigurd was sometimes home at Reyri; for Gregorius, who was nearly related to Sigurd, had obtained for him life and safety from King Inge, so that he retained all his estates. King Hakon was in the merchant-town of Nidaros in Yule; and one evening in the beginning of Yule his men fought in the room of the court, and in this affray eight men were killed, and many were wounded. The eighth day of Yule, King Hakon's man Alf Rode, son of Ottar Birthing, with about eighty men, went to Elda, and came in the night unexpectedly on the people, who were very drunk, and set fire to the room; but they went out, and defended themselves bravely. There fell Bergliot, Ivar's son, and Ogmund, his brother, and many more. They had been nearly thirty altogether in number. In winter died, north in the merchant-town, Andres Simonson, King Hakon's foster-brother; and his death was much deplored. Erling Skakke and Inge's men, who were in Bergen, threatened that in winter they would pro-

ceed against Hakon and his men; but it came to nothing. Gregorius sent word from the east, from Konungahella, that if he were so near as Erling and his men, he would not sit quietly in Bergen while Hakon was killing King Inge's friends and their comrades in war north in the Throndhjem country.

12. THE CONFLICT UPON THE PIERS.

King Inge and Gregorius left the east in spring, and came to Bergen; but as soon as Hakon and Sigurd heard that Inge had left Viken, they went there by land. When King Inge and his people came to Bergen, a quarrel arose between Haldor Brynjolfson and Bjorn Nikolason. Bjorn's house-man asked Haldor's when they met at the pier, why he looked so pale.

He replied, because he had been bled.

"I could not look so pale if I tried, at merely being bled."

"I again think," retorted the other, "that thou wouldst have borne it worse, and less manfully." And no other beginning was there for their quarrel than this. Afterwards one word followed another, till from brawling they came to fighting. It was told to Haldor Brynjolfson, who was in the house drinking, that his house-man was wounded down on the pier and he went there immediately. But Bjorn's house-men had come there before, and as Haldor thought his house-man had been badly treated, he went up to them and beat them; and it was told to Bjorn Buk that the people of Viken were beating his house-men on the pier. Then Bjorn and his house-men took their weapons, hurried down to the pier, and would avenge their men; and a bloody strife began. It was told Gregorius that his relation Haldor required assistance, and that his house-men were being cut down in the street; on which Gregorius and his men ran to the place in their armour. Now it was told Erling Skakke that his sister's son Bjorn was fighting with Gregorius and Haldor down on the piers, and that he needed help. Then he proceeded thither with a great force, and exhorted the people to stand by him; saying it would be a great disgrace never to be wiped out, if the Viken people should trample upon them in their own native place. There fell thirteen men, of whom nine were killed on the spot, and four died of their wounds, and many were wounded. When the word came to King Inge that Gregorius and Erling were fighting down on the piers, he hastened there, and tried to separate them; but could do nothing, so mad were they on both sides. Then Gregorius called to Inge, and told him to go away; for it was in vain to attempt coming between them, as matters now stood. He said it would be the greatest misfortune if the king mixed himself up with it; for he could not be certain that there were not people in the fray who would commit some great misdeed if they had opportunity. Then King Inge retired; and when the greatest tumult was over, Gregorius and his men went to Nikolas church, and Erling behind them, calling to each other. Then King Inge came a second time, and pacified them; and both agreed that he should mediate between them.

When King Inge and Gregorius heard that King Hakon was in Viken, they went east with many ships; but when they came King Hakon fled from them, and there was no battle. Then King Inge went to Oslo, and Gregorius was in Konungahella.

13. MUNAN'S DEATH.

Soon after Gregorius heard that Hakon and his men were at a farm called Saurby, which lies up beside the forest. Gregorius hastened there; came in the night; and supposing that King Hakon and Sigurd would be in the largest of the houses, set fire to the buildings there. But Hakon and his men were in the smaller house, and came forth, seeing the fire, to help their people. There Munan fell, a son of Ale Uskeynd, a brother of King Sigurd Hakon's father. Gregorius and his men killed him, because he was helping those whom they were burning within the house. Some escaped, but many were killed. Asbjorn Jalda, who had been a very great viking, escaped from the house, but was grievously wounded. A bonde met him, and he offered the man money to let him get away; but the bonde replied, he would do what he liked best; and, adding that he had often been in fear of his life for him, he slew him. King Hakon and Sigurd escaped, but many of their people were killed. Thereafter Gregorius returned home to Konungahella. Soon af-

ter King Hakon and Sigurd went to Haldor Brynjolfson's farm of Vettaland, set fire to the house, and burnt it. Haldor went out, and was cut down instantly with his house-men; and in all there were about twenty men killed. Sigrid, Haldor's wife, was a sister of Gregorius, and they allowed her to escape into the forest in her night-shift only; but they took with them Amunde, who was a son of Gyrd Amundason and of Gyrd Dag's daughter, and a sister's son of Gregorius, and who was then a boy about five years old.

14. OF THE FALL OF GREGORIUS DAGSON.

When Gregorius heard the news he took it much to heart, and inquired carefully where they were. Gregorius set out from Konungahella late in Yule, and came to Fors the thirteenth day of Yule, where he remained a night, and heard vespers the last day of Yule, which was a Saturday, and the holy Evangel was read before him. When Gregorius and his followers saw the men of King Hakon and Sigurd, the king's force appeared to them smaller than their own. There was a river called Befia between them, where they met; and there was unsound ice on the river, for there went a stream under the ice from it. King Hakon and his men had cut a rent in the ice, and laid snow over it, so that nobody could see it. When Gregorius came to the ice on the river the ice appeared to him unsound, he said; and he advised the people to go to the bridge, which was close by, to cross the river. The bonde-troops replied, that they did not know why he should be afraid to go across the ice to attack so few people as Hakon had, and the ice was good enough. Gregorius said it was seldom necessary to encourage him to show bravery, and it should not be so now. Then he ordered them to follow him, and not to be standing on the land while he was on the ice, and he said it was their council to go out upon the dangerous ice, but he had no wish to do so, or to be led by them. Then he ordered the banner to be advanced, and immediately went out on the ice with the men. As soon as the bondes found that the ice was unsound they turned back. Gregorius fell through the ice, but not very deep, and he told his men to take care. There were not more than twenty men with him, the others having turned back. A man of King Hakon's troop shot an arrow at Gregorius, which hit him under the throat, and thus ended his life. Gregorius fell, and ten men with him. It is the talk of all men that he had been the most gallant lenderman in Norway that any man then living could remember; and also he behaved the best towards us Icelanders of any chief since King Eystein the Elder's death. Gregorius's body was carried to Hofund, and interred at Gimsey Isle, in a nunnery which is there, of which Gregorius's sister, Baugeid, was then the abbess.

15. KING INGE HEARS OF GREGORIUS'S FALL.

Two bailiffs went to Oslo to bring the tidings to King Inge. When they arrived they desired to speak to the king; and he asked, what news they brought.

"Gregorius Dagson's death," said they.

"How came that misfortune?" asked the king.

When they had told him how it happened, he said, "They gave advice who understood the least."

It is said he took it so much to heart that he cried like a child. When he recovered himself he said, "I wanted to go to Gregorius as soon as I heard of Haldor's murder; for I thought that Gregorius would not sit long before thinking of revenge. But the people here would think nothing so important as their Yule feasts, and nothing could move them away; and I am confident that if I had been there, he would either have proceeded more cautiously, or I and Gregorius would now have shared one lodging. Now he is gone, the man who has been my best friend, and more than any other has kept the kingdom in my hands; and I think it will be but a short space between us. Now I make an oath to go forth against Hakon, and one of two things shall happen: I shall either come to my death, or shall walk over Hakon and his people; and such a man as Gregorius is not avenged, even if all were to pay the penalty of their lives for him."

There was a man present who replied, "Ye need not seek after them, for they intend to seek you."

Kristin, King Sigurd's daughter and King Inge's cousin, was then in Oslo. The king heard that she intended going away. He sent a message to her to inquire why she wished to leave the town.

She thought it was dangerous and unsafe for a female to be there. The king would not let her go. "For if it go well with me, as I hope, you will be well here; and if I fall, my friends may not get leave to dress my body; but you can ask permission, and it will not be denied you, and you will thereby best requite what I have done for you."

16. OF KING INGE.

On Saint Blasius' day (February 3, 1161), in the evening, King Inge's spies brought him the news that King Hakon was coming towards the town. Then King Inge ordered the war-horns to call together all the troops up from the town; and when he drew them up he could reckon them to be nearly 4000 men. The king let the array be long, but not more than five men deep. Then some said that the king should not be himself in the battle, as they thought the risk too great; but that his brother Orm should be the leader of the army. The king replied, "I think if Gregorius were alive and here now, and I had fallen and was to be avenged, he would not lie concealed, but would be in the battle. Now, although I, on account of my ill health, am not fit for the combat as he was, yet will I show as good will as he would have had; and it is not to be thought of that I should not be in the battle."

People say that Gunhild, who was married to Simon, King Hakon's foster-brother, had a witch employed to sit out all night and procure the victory for Hakon; and that the answer was obtained, that they should fight King Inge by night, and never by day, and then the result would be favourable. The witch who, as people say, sat out was called Thordis Skeggia; but what truth there may be in the report I know not.

Simon Skalp had gone to the town, and was gone to sleep, when the war-shouts awoke him. When the night was well advanced, King Inge's spies came to him, and told him that King Hakon and his army were coming over the ice; for the ice lay the whole way from the town to Hofud Isle.

17. KING INGE'S SPEECH.

Thereupon King Inge went with his army out on the ice, and he drew it up in order of battle in front of the town. Simon Skalp was in that wing of the array which was towards Thraelaberg; and on the other wing, which was towards the Nunnery, was Gudrod, the king of the South Hebudes, a son of Olaf Klining, and Jon, a son of Svein Bergthor Buk. When King Hakon and his army came near to King Inge's array, both sides raised a war-shout. Gudrod and Jon gave King Hakon and his men a sign, and let them know where they were in the line; and as soon as Hakon's men in consequence turned thither, Gudrod immediately fled with 1500 men; and Jon, and a great body of men with him, ran over to King Hakon's army, and assisted them in the fight. When this news was told to King Inge, he said, "Such is the difference between my friends. Never would Gregorius have done so in his life!" There were some who advised King Inge to get on horseback, and ride from the battle up to Raumarike; "where," said they, "you would get help enough, even this very day." The king replied, he had no inclination to do so. "I have heard you often say, and I think truly, that it was of little use to my brother, King Eystein, that he took to flight; and yet he was a man distinguished for many qualities which adorn a king. Now I, who labour under so great decrepitude, can see how bad my fate would be, if I betook myself to what proved so unfortunate for him; with so great a difference as there is between our activity, health, and strength. I was in the second year of my age when I was chosen king of Norway, and I am now twenty-five; and I think I have had misfortune and sorrow under my kingly dignity, rather than pleasure and peaceful days. I have had many battles, sometimes with more, sometimes with fewer people; and it is my greatest luck that I have never fled. God will dispose of my life, and of how long it shall be; but I shall never betake myself to flight."

18. KING INGE'S FALL.

Now as Jon and his troop had broken the one wing of King Inge's array, many of those who were nearest to him fled, by which the whole array was dispersed, and fell into disorder. But Hakon and his men went briskly forwards; and now it was near daybreak. An assault was made against King Inge's banner, and in this conflict King Inge fell; but his brother Orm continued the battle, while many of the army fled up into the town. Twice Orm went to the town after the king's fall to encourage the people, and both times returned, and went out again upon the ice to continue the battle. Hakon's men attacked the wing of the array which Simon Skalp led; and in that assault fell of King Inge's men his brother-in-law, Gudbrand Skafhogson. Simon Skalp and Halvard Hikre went against each other with their troops, and fought while they drew aside past Thraelaberg; and in this conflict both Simon and Halvard fell. Orm, the king's brother, gained great reputation in this battle; but he at last fled. Orm the winter before had been contracted with Ragna, a daughter of Nikolas Mase, who had been married before to King Eystein Haraldson; and the wedding was fixed for the Sunday after Saint Blasius's mass, which was on a Friday. Orm fled east to Svithjod, where his brother Magnus was then king; and their brother Ragnvald was an earl there at that time. They were the sons of Queen Ingerid and Henrik Halte, who was a son of the Danish king Svein Sveinsson. The princess Kristin took care of King Inge's body, which was laid on the stone wall of Halvard's church, on the south side without the choir. He had then been king for twenty-three years (A.D. 1137-1161). In this battle many fell on both sides, but principally of King Inge's men. Of King Hakon's people fell Arne Frirekson. Hakon's men took all the feast and victuals prepared for the wedding, and a great booty besides.

19. OF KING HAKON AND QUEEN KRISTIN.

Then King Hakon took possession of the whole country, and distributed all the offices among his own friends, both in the towns and in the country. King Hakon and his men had a meeting in Halvard's church, where they had a private conference concerning the management of the country. Kristin the princess gave the priest who kept the church keys a large sum of money to conceal one of her men in the church, so that she might know what Hakon and his counsellors intended. When she learnt what they had said, she sent a man to Bergen to her husband Erling Skakke, with the message that he should never trust Hakon or his men.

20. OF OLAF'S MIRACLE.

It happened at the battle of Stiklestad, as before related, that King Olaf threw from him the sword called Hneiter when he received his wound. A Swedish man, who had broken his own sword, took it up, and fought with it. When this man escaped with the other fugitives he came to Svithjod, and went home to his house. From that time he kept the sword all his days, and afterwards his son, and so relation after relation; and when the sword shifted its owner, the one told to the other the name of the sword and where it came from. A long time after, in the days of Kirjalax the emperor of Constantinople, when there was a great body of Varings in the town, it happened in the summer that the emperor was on a campaign, and lay in the camp with his army. The Varings who had the guard, and watched over the emperor, lay on the open plain without the camp. They changed the watch with each other in the night, and those who had been before on watch lay down and slept; but all completely armed. It was their custom, when they went to sleep, that each should have his helmet on his head, his shield over him, sword under the head, and the right hand on the sword-handle. One of these comrades, whose lot it was to watch the latter part of the night, found, on awakening towards morning, that his sword was gone. He looked after it, and saw it lying on the flat plain at a distance from him. He got up and took the sword, thinking that his comrades who had been on watch had taken the sword from him in a joke; but they all denied it. The same thing happened three nights. Then he wondered at it, as well as they who saw or heard of it; and people began to ask him how it could

have happened. He said that his sword was called Hneiter, and had belonged to King Olaf the Saint, who had himself carried it in the battle of Stiklestad; and he also related how the sword since that time had gone from one to another. This was told to the emperor, who called the man before him to whom the sword belonged, and gave him three times as much gold as the sword was worth; and the sword itself he had laid in Saint Olaf's church, which the Varings supported, where it has been ever since over the altar. There was a lenderman of Norway while Harald Gille's sons, Eystein, Inge, and Sigurd lived, who was called Eindride Unge; and he was in Constantinople when these events took place. He told these circumstances in Norway, according to what Einar Skulason says in his song about King Olaf the Saint, in which these events are sung.

21. OLAF'S MIRACLE IN FAVOUR OF THE VARINGS.

It happened once in the Greek country, when Kirjalax was emperor there, that he made an expedition against Blokumannaland. When he came to the Pezina plains, a heathen king came against him with an innumerable host. He brought with him many horse-men, and many large waggons, in which were large loop-holes for shooting through. When they prepared for their night quarters they drew up their waggons, one by the side of the other, without their tents, and dug a great ditch without; and all which made a defence as strong as a castle. The heathen king was blind. Now when the Greek king came, the heathens drew up their array on the plains before their wagon-fortification. The Greeks drew up their array opposite, and they rode on both sides to fight with each other; but it went on so ill and so unfortunately, that the Greeks were compelled to fly after suffering a great defeat, and the heathens gained a victory. Then the king drew up an array of Franks and Flemings, who rode against the heathens, and fought with them; but it went with them as with the others, that many were killed, and all who escaped took to flight. Then the Greek king was greatly incensed at his men-at-arms; and they replied, that he should now take his wine-bags, the Varings. The king says that he would not throw away his jewels, and allow so few men, however bold they might be, to attack so vast an army. Then Thoror Helsifg, who at that time was leader of the Varings replied to the king's words, "If there was burning fire in the way, I and my people would run into it, if I knew the king's advantage required it." Then the king replied, "Call upon your holy King Olaf for help and strength." The Varings, who were 450 men, made a vow with hand and word to build a church in Constantinople, at their own expense and with the aid of other good men, and have the church consecrated to the honour and glory of the holy King Olaf; and thereupon the Varings rushed into the plain. When the heathens saw them, they told their king that there was another troop of the Greek king's army come out upon the plain; but they were only a handful of people. The king says, "Who is that venerable man riding on a white horse at the head of the troop?" They replied, "We do not see him." There was so great a difference of numbers, that there were sixty heathens for every Christian man; but notwithstanding the Varings went boldly to the attack. As soon as they met terror and alarm seized the army of the heathens, and they instantly began to fly; but the Varings pursued, and soon killed a great number of them. When the Greeks and Franks who before had fled from the heathens saw this, they hastened to take part, and pursue the enemy with the others. Then the Varings had reached the wagon-fortification, where the greatest defeat was given to the enemy. The heathen king was taken in the flight of his people, and the Varings brought him along with them; after which the Christians took the camp of the heathens, and their wagon-fortification.

MAGNUS ERLINGSON'S SAGA.

1. OF MAGNUS ERLINGSON'S BEGINNING.

When Erling got certain intelligence of the determinations of Hakon and his counsellors, he sent a message to all the chiefs who he knew had been steady friends of King Inge, and also to his

court-men and his retinue, who had saved themselves by flight, and also to all Gregorius's house-men, and called them together to a meeting. When they met, and conversed with each other, they resolved to keep their men together; and which resolution they confirmed by oath and hand-shake to each other. Then they considered whom they should take to be king. Erling Skakke first spoke, and inquired if it was the opinion of the chiefs and other men of power that Simon Skalp's son, the son of the daughter of King Harald Gille, should be chosen king, and Jon Halkelson be taken to lead the army; but Jon refused it. Then it was inquired if Nikolas Skjaldvarson, a sister's son of King Magnus Barefoot, would place himself at the head of the army; but he answered thus:—It was his opinion that some one should be chosen king who was of the royal race; and, for leader of the troops, some one from whom help and understanding were to be looked for; and then it would be easier to gather an army. It was now tried whether Arne would let any of his sons, King Inge's brothers, be proclaimed king. Arne replies, that Kristin's son, she was the daughter of King Sigurd the Crusader, was nearest by propinquity of descent to the crown of Norway. "And here is also a man to be his adviser, and whose duty it is to take care of him and of the kingdom; and that man is his father Erling, who is both prudent, brave, experienced in war, and an able man in governing the kingdom; he wants no capability of bringing this counsel into effect, if luck be with him." Many thought well of this advice.

Erling replied to it, "As far as I can see or hear in this meeting, the most will rather be excused from taking upon themselves such a difficult business. Now it appears to me altogether uncertain, provided we begin this work, whether he who puts himself at the head of it will gain any honour; or whether matters will go as they have done before when any one undertakes such great things, that he loses all his property and possibly his life. But if this counsel be adopted, there may be men who will undertake to carry it through; but he who comes under such an obligation must seek, in every way, to prevent any opposition or enmity from those who are now in this council."

All gave assurance that they would enter into this confederacy with perfect fidelity. Then said Erling, "I can say for myself that it would almost be my death to serve King Hakon; and however dangerous it may be, I will rather venture to adopt your advice, and take upon me to lead this force, if that be the will, counsel, and desire of you all, and if you will all bind yourselves to this agreement by oath."

To this they all agreed; and in this meeting it was determined to take Erling's son Magnus to be king. They afterwards held a Thing in the town; and at this Thing Magnus Erlingson, then five years old, was elected king of the whole country. All who had been servants of King Inge went into his service, and each of them retained the office and dignity he had held under King Inge (A.D. 1161).

2. KING MAGNUS GOES TO DENMARK.

Erling Skakke made himself ready to travel, fitted out ships, and had with him King Magnus, together with the household-men who were on the spot. In this expedition were the king's relatives,—Arne; Ingerid, King Inge's mother, with her two sons; besides Jon Kutiza, a son of Sigurd Stork, and Erling's house-men, as well as those who had been Gregorius's house-men; and they had in all ten ships. They went south to Denmark to King Valdemar and Buriz Heinrekson, King Inge's brother. King Valdemar was King Magnus's blood-relation; for Ingebjorg, mother of King Valdemar, and Malmfrid, mother of Kristin, King Magnus's mother, were cousins. The Danish king received them hospitably, and he and Erling had private meetings and consultations: and so much was known of their counsels, that King Valdemar was to aid King Magnus with such help as might be required from his kingdom to win and retain Norway. On the other hand, King Valdemar should get that domain in Norway which his ancestors Harald Gormson and Svein Forked-beard had possessed; namely, the whole of Viken as far north as Rygiarbit. This agreement was confirmed by oath and a fixed treaty. Then Erling and King Magnus made themselves ready to leave Denmark, and they sailed out

of Vendilskage.

3. BATTLE OF TUNSBURG.

King Hakon went in spring, after the Easter week, north to Throndhjem, and had with him the whole fleet that had belonged to King Inge. He held a Thing there in the merchant-town, and was chosen king of the whole country. Then he made Sigurd of Reyran an earl, and gave him an earldom, and afterwards proceeded southwards with his followers all the way to Viken. The king went to Tunsberg; but sent Earl Sigurd east to Konungahella, to defend the country with a part of the forces in case Erling should come from the south. Erling and his fleet came to Agder, and went straight north to Bergen, where they killed Arne Brigdarskalle, King Hakon's officer, and came back immediately against King Hakon. Earl Sigurd, who had not observed the journey of Erling and his followers from the south, was at that time east in the Gaut river, and King Hakon was in Tunsberg. Erling brought up at Hrossanes, and lay there some nights. In the meantime King Hakon made preparations in the town. When Erling and his fleet were coming up to the town, they took a merchant vessel, filled it with wood and straw, and set fire to it; and the wind blowing right towards the town, drove the vessel against the piers. Erling had two cables brought on board the vessel, and made fast to two boats, and made them row along as the vessel drove. Now when the fire was come almost abreast of the town, those who were in the boats held back the vessel by the ropes, so that the town could not be set on fire; but so thick a smoke spread from it over the town, that one could not see from the piers where the king's array was. Then Erling drew the whole fleet in where the wind carried the fire, and shot at the enemy. When the townspeople saw that the fire was approaching their houses, and many were wounded by the bowmen, they resolved to send the priest Hroald, the long-winded speaker, to Erling, to beg him to spare them and the town; and they dissolved the array in favour of Hakon, as soon as Hroald told them their prayer was granted. Now when the array of townspeople had dispersed, the men on the piers were much thinned: however, some urged Hakon's men to make resistance: but Onund Simonson, who had most influence over the army, said, "I will not fight for Earl Sigurd's earldom, since he is not here himself." Then Onund fled, and was followed by all the people, and by the king himself; and they hastened up the country. King Hakon lost many men here; and these verses were made about it:—

Onund declares he will not go
In battle 'gainst Earl Sigurd's foe,
If Earl Sigurd does not come,
But with his house-men sits at home.
King Magnus' men rush up the street,
Eager with Hakon's troop to meet;
But Hakon's war-hawks, somewhat shy,
Turn quick about, and off they fly.

Thorbjorn Skakkaskald also said:—

The Tunsberg men would not be slow
In thy good cause to risk a blow;
And well they knew the chief could stain
The wolves' mouths on a battle-plain.
But the town champion rather fears
The sharp bright glance of levelled spears;
Their steel-clad warrior loves no fight
Where bowstring twangs, or fire flies bright.

King Hakon then took the land-road northwards to Throndhjem. When Earl Sigurd heard of this, he proceeded with all the ships he could get the seaway north-wards, to meet King Hakon there.

4. OF ERLING AND HAKON.

Erling Skakke took all the ships in Tunsberg belonging to King Hakon, and there he also took the Baekisudin which had belonged to King Inge. Then Erling proceeded, and reduced the whole of Viken in obedience to King Magnus, and also the whole country north wheresoever he appeared up to Bergen, where he remained all winter. There Erling killed Ingebjorn Sipil, King Hakon's lendarman of the north part of the Fjord district. In winter (A.D. 1162) King Hakon was in Throndhjem; but in the following spring he ordered a levy, and prepared to go against Erling. He had with him

Earl Sigurd, Jon Sveinson, Eindride Unge, Onund Simonson, Philip Peterson, Philip Gyrdson, Ragnvald Kunta, Sigurd Kapa, Sigurd Hiupa, Frirek Keina, Asbjorn of Forland, Thorbjorn, a son of Gunnar the treasurer, and Stradbjarne.

5. OF ERLING'S PEOPLE.

Erling was in Bergen with a great armament, and resolved to lay a sailing prohibition on all the merchant vessels which were going north to Nidaros; for he knew that King Hakon would soon get tidings of him, if ships were sailing between the towns. Besides, he gave out that it was better for Bergen to get the goods, even if the owners were obliged to sell them cheaper than they wished than that they should fall into the hands of enemies and thereby strengthen them. And now a great many vessels were assembled at Bergen, for many arrived every day, and none were allowed to go away. Then Erling let some of the lightest of his vessels be laid ashore, and spread the report that he would wait for Hakon, and, with the help of his friends and relations, oppose the enemy there. He then one day called a meeting of the ship-masters, and gave them and all the merchant ships and their steersmen leave to go where they pleased. When the men who had charge of the cargoes, and were all ready to sail away with their goods, some for trade, others on various business, had got leave from Erling Skakke to depart, there was a soft and favourable wind for sailing north along the coast. Before the evening all who were ready had set sail, and hastened on as fast as they could, according to the speed of their vessels, the one vying with the other. When this fleet came north to More, Hakon's fleet had arrived there before them: and he himself was there fully engaged in collecting people, and summoning to him the lendermen, and all liable to serve in the levy, without having for a long time heard any news from Bergen. Now, however, they heard, as the latest news, that Erling Skakke had laid his ships up in Bergen, and there they would find him; and also that he had a large force with him. King Hakon sailed from thence to Veey, and sent away Earl Sigurd and Onund Simonson to gather people, and sent men also to both the More districts. After King Hakon had remained a few days at the town he sailed farther, and proceeded to the South, thinking that it would both promote his journey and enable new levies to join him sooner.

Erling Skakke had given leave on Sunday to all the merchant vessels to leave Bergen; and on Tuesday, as soon as the early mass was over, he ordered the warhorns to sound, summoned to him the men-at-arms and the townsmen, and let the ships which were laid up on shore be drawn down into the water. Then Erling held a House-Thing with his men and the people of the levy; told them his intentions; named ship commanders; and had the names called over of the men who were to be on board of the king's ship. This Thing ended with Erling's order to every man to make himself ready in his berth wherever a place was appointed him; and declared that he who remained in the town after the Baekisudin was hauled out, should be punished by loss of life or limb. Orm, the king's brother, laid his ships out in the harbour immediately that evening, and many others, and the greater number were afloat before.

6. OF ERLING SKAKKE.

On Wednesday, before mass was sung in the town, Erling sailed from Bergen with all his fleet, consisting of twenty-one ships; and there was a fresh breeze for sailing northwards along the coast. Erling had his son King Magnus with him, and there were many lendermen accompanied by the finest men. When Erling came north, abreast of the Fjord district, he sent a boat on shore to Jon Halkelson's farm, and took Nikolas, a son of Simon Skalp and of Maria, Harald Gille's daughter, and brought him out to the fleet, and put him on board the king's ship. On Friday, immediately after matins, they sailed to Steinavag, and King Hakon, with thirteen ships, was lying in the harbour in the neighbourhood. He himself and his men were up at play upon the island, and the lendermen were sitting on the hill, when they saw a boat rowing from the south with two men in it, who were bending back deep towards the keel, and taking hasty strokes with their oars. When they came to the shore they did not belay the boat, but both ran from

it. The great men seeing this, said to each other, "These men must have some news to tell;" and got up to meet them. When they met, Onund Simonson asked, "Have ye any news of Erling Skakke, that ye are running so fast?"

They answered, as soon as they could get out the words, for they had lost their breath, "Here comes Erling against you, sailing from the south, with twenty-one ships, or thereabouts, of which many are great enough; and now ye will soon see their sails."

Then said Eindride Unge, "Too near to the nose, said the peasant, when his eye was knocked out."

They went in haste now to where the games were playing, and immediately the war-horns resounded, and with the battle-call all the people were gathered down to the ships in the greatest haste. It was just the time of day when their meat was nearly cooked. All the men rushed to the ships, and each ran on board the vessel that was nearest to him, so that the ships were unequally manned. Some took to the oars; some raised the masts, turned the heads of the vessels to the north, and steered for Veey, where they expected much assistance from the towns.

7. FALL OF KING HAKON.

Soon after they saw the sails of Erling's fleet, and both fleets came in sight of each other. Eindride Unge had a ship called Draglaun, which was a large buss-like long-ship, but which had but a small crew; for those who belonged to her had run on board of other ships, and she was therefore the hindmost of Hakon's fleet. When Eindride came abreast of the island Sek, the Baekisudin, which Erling Skakke himself commanded, came up with her; and these two ships were bound fast together. King Hakon and his followers had arrived close to Veey; but when they heard the war-horn they turned again to assist Eindride. Now they began the battle on both sides, as the vessels came up. Many of the sails lay midships across the vessels; and the ships were not made fast to each other, but they lay side by side. The conflict was not long before there came disorder in Hakon's ship; and some fell, and others sprang overboard. Hakon threw over him a grey cloak, and jumped on board another ship; but when he had been there a short time he thought he had got among his enemies; and when he looked about him he saw none of his men nor of his ships near him. Then he went into the Baekisudin to the fore-castle-men, and begged his life. They took him in their keeping, and gave him quarter. In this conflict there was a great loss of people, but principally of Hakon's men. In the Baekisudin fell Nikolas, Simon Skalp's son; and Erling's men are accused of having killed him themselves. Then there was a pause in the battle, and the vessels separated. It was now told to Erling that Hakon was on board of his ship; that the fore-castle-men had taken him, and threatened that they would defend him with arms. Erling sent men forwards in the ship to bring the fore-castle-men his orders to guard Hakon well, so that he should not get away. He at the same time let it be understood that he had no objection to giving the king life and safety, if the other chiefs were willing, and a peace could be established. All the fore-castle-men gave their chief great credit and honour for these words. Then Erling ordered anew a blast of the war-horns, and that the ships should be attacked which had not lost their men; saying that they would never have such another opportunity of avenging King Inge. Thereupon they all raised a war-shout, encouraged each other, and rushed to the assault. In this tumult King Hakon received his death-wound. When his men knew he had fallen they rowed with all their might against the enemy, threw away their shields, slashed with both hands, and cared not for life. This heat and recklessness, however, proved soon a great loss to them; for Erling's men saw the unprotected parts of their bodies, and where their blows would have effect. The greater part of Hakon's men who remained fell here; and it was principally owing to the want of numbers, as they were not enough to defend themselves. They could not get quarter, also excepting those whom the chiefs took under their protection and bound themselves to pay ransom for. The following of Hakon's people fell: Sigurd Kapa, Sigurd Hiupa, and Ragnvald Kunta; but some ships crews got away, rowed into the fjords, and thus saved their lives. Hakon's body was carried to Raumsdal, and buried there; but af-

terwards his brother, King Sverre, had the body transported north to the merchant town Nidaros, and laid in the stone wall of Christ church south of the choir.

8. FLIGHT OF THE CHIEFS OF HAKON'S MEN.

Earl Sigurd, Eindride Unge, Onund Simonson, Firek Keina, and other chiefs kept the troop together, left the ships in Raumsdal, and went up to the Uplands. King Magnus and his father Erling sailed with their troops north to Nidaros in Throndhjem, and subdued the country as they went along. Erling called together an Eyra-thing, at which King Magnus was proclaimed king of all Norway. Erling, however, remained there but a short time; for he thought the Throndhjem people were not well affected towards him and his son. King Magnus was then called king of the whole country.

King Hakon had been a handsome man in appearance, well grown, tall and thin; but rather broad-shouldered, on which account his men called him Herdebreid. As he was young in years, his lendemen ruled for him. He was cheerful and friendly in conversation, playful and youthful in his ways, and was much liked by the people.

9. OF KING SIGURD'S BEGINNING.

There was an Upland man called Markus of Skog, who was a relation of Earl Sigurd. Markus brought up a son of King Sigurd Mun, who was also called Sigurd. This Sigurd was chosen king (A.D. 1162) by the Upland people, by the advice of Earl Sigurd and the other chiefs who had followed King Hakon. They had now a great army, and the troops were divided in two bodies; so that Markus and the king were less exposed where there was anything to do, and Earl Sigurd and his troop, along with the lendemen, were most in the way of danger. They went with their troops mostly through the Uplands, and sometimes eastwards to Viken. Erling Skakke had his son King Magnus always with him, and he had also the whole fleet and the land defence under him. He was a while in Bergen in autumn; but went from thence eastward to Viken, where he settled in Tunsberg for his winter quarters (A.D. 1163), and collected in Viken all the taxes and revenues that belonged to Magnus as king; and he had many and very fine troops. As Earl Sigurd had but a small part of the country, and kept many men on foot, he soon was in want of money; and where there was no chief in the neighbourhood he had to seek money by unlawful ways,—sometimes by unfounded accusations and fines, sometimes by open robbery.

10. EARL SIGURD'S CONDEMNATION.

At that time the realm of Norway was in great prosperity. The bondes were rich and powerful, unaccustomed to hostilities or violence, and the oppression of roving troops; so that there was soon a great noise and scandal when they were despoiled and robbed. The people of Viken were very friendly to Erling and King Magnus, principally from the popularity of the late King Inge Haraldson; for the Viken people had always served under his banner. Erling kept a guard in the town, and twelve men were on watch every night. Erling had Things regularly with the bondes, at which the misdeeds of Sigurd's people were often talked over; and by the representations of Erling and his adherents, the bondes were brought unanimously to consider that it would be a great good fortune if these bands should be rooted out. Arne, the king's relation, spoke well and long on this subject, and at last severely; and required that all who were at the Thing,—men-at-arms, bondes, towns-men, and merchants,—should come to the resolution to sentence according to law Earl Sigurd and all his troop, and deliver them to Satan, both living and dead. From the animosity and hatred of the people, this was agreed to by all; and thus the unheard-of deed was adopted and confirmed by oath, as if a judgment in the case was delivered there by the Thing according to law. The priest Hroald the Long-winded, who was a very eloquent man, spoke in the case; but his speech was to the same purpose as that of others who had spoken before. Erling gave a

feast at Yule in Tunsberg, and paid the wages of the men-at-arms at Candlemas.

11. OF ERLING.

Earl Sigurd went with his best troops down to Viken, where many people were obliged to submit to his superior force, and many had to pay money. He drove about thus widely higher up the country, penetrating into different districts. But there were some in his troop who desired privately to make peace with Erling; but they got back the answer, that all who asked for their lives should obtain quarter, but they only should get leave to remain in the country who had not been guilty of any great offenses against Erling. And when Sigurd's adherents heard that they would not get leave to remain in the country, they held together in one body; for there were many among them who knew for certain that Erling would look upon them as guilty of offences against him. Philip Gyrdson made terms with Erling, got his property back, and went home to his farm; but soon after Sigurd's men came there, and killed him. They committed many crimes against each other, and many men were slain in their mutual persecution; but here what was committed by the chiefs only is written down.

12. ERLING GETS NEWS OF EARL SIGURD.

It was in the beginning of Lent that news came to Erling that Earl Sigurd intended to come upon him; and news of him came here and there, sometimes nearer, sometimes farther off. Erling sent out spies in all quarters around to discover where they were. Every evening he assembled all the men-at-arms by the war-horn out of the town; and for a long time in the winter they lay under arms all night, ready to be drawn up in array. At last Erling got intelligence that Sigurd and his followers were not far distant, up at the farm Re. Erling then began his expedition out of the town, and took with him all the towns-people who were able to carry arms and had arms, and likewise all the merchants; and left only twelve men behind to keep watch in the town. Erling went out of the town on Thursday afternoon, in the second week of Lent (February 19); and every man had two days' provisions with him. They marched by night, and it was late before they got out of the town with the men. Two men were with each shield and each horse; and the people, when mustered, were about 1200 men. When they met their spies, they were informed that Sigurd was at Re, in a house called Rafnnes, and had 500 men. Then Erling called together his people; told them the news he had received, and all were eager to hasten their march, fall on them in the houses, or engage them by night.

Erling replied to them thus:—"It is probable that we and Earl Sigurd shall soon meet. There are also many men in this band whose handy-work remains in our memories; such as cutting down King Inge, and so many more of our friends, that it would take long to reckon them up. These deeds they did by the power of Satan, by witchcraft, and by villainy; for it stands in our laws and country rights, that however highly a man may have been guilty, it shall be called villainy and cowardly murder to kill him in the night. This band has had its luck hitherto by following the counsel of men acquainted with witchcraft and fighting by night, and not in the light of day; and by this proceeding have they been victorious hitherto over the chiefs whose heads they have laid low on the earth. Now we have often seen, and proved, how unsuitable and improper it is to go into battle in the nighttime; therefore let us rather have before our eyes the example of chiefs better known to us, and who deserve better to be imitated, and fight by open day in regular battle array, and not steal upon sleeping men in the night. We have people enough against them, so few as they are. Let us, therefore, wait for day and daylight, and keep together in our array in case they attack us."

Thereafter the whole army sat down. Some opened up bundles of hay, and made a bed of it for themselves; some sat upon their shields, and thus waited the daydawn. The weather was raw, and there was a wet snowdrift.

13. OF EARL SIGURD'S BATTLE ARRAY.

Earl Sigurd got the first intelligence of Erling's army, when it was already near to the house. His men got up, and armed themselves; but not knowing how many men Erling had with him, some were inclined to fly, but the most determined to stand. Earl Sigurd was a man of understanding, and could talk well, but certainly was not considered brave enough to take a strong resolution; and indeed the earl showed a great inclination to fly, for which he got many stinging words from his men-at-arms. As day dawned, they began on both sides to draw up their battle array. Earl Sigurd placed his men on the edge of a ridge between the river and the house, at a place at which a little stream runs into the river. Erling and his people placed their array on the other side of the river; but at the back of his array were men on horseback well armed, who had the king with them. When Earl Sigurd's men saw that there was so great a want of men on their side, they held a council, and were for taking to the forest. But Earl Sigurd said, "Ye alleged that I had no courage, but it will now be proved; and let each of you take care not to fail, or fly, before I do so. We have a good battle-field. Let them cross the bridge; but as soon as the banner comes over it let us then rush down the hill upon them, and none desert his neighbour."

Earl Sigurd had on a red-brown kirtle, and a red cloak, of which the corners were tied and turned back; shoes on his feet; and a shield and sword called Bastard. The earl said, "God knows that I would rather get at Erling Skakke with a stroke of Bastard, than receive much gold."

14. EARL SIGURD'S FALL.

Erling Skakke's army wished to go on to the bridge; but Erling told them to go up along the river, which was small, and not difficult to cross, as its banks were flat; and they did so. Earl Sigurd's array proceeded up along the ridge right opposite to them; but as the ridge ended, and the ground was good and level over the river, Erling told his men to sing a Paternoster, and beg God to give them the victory who best deserved it. Then they all sang aloud "Kyrie Eleison", and struck with their weapons on their shields. But with this singing 300 men of Erling's people slipped away and fled. Then Erling and his people went across the river, and the earl's men raised the war-shout; but there was no assault from the ridge down upon Erling's array, but the battle began upon the hill itself. They first used spears then edge weapons; and the earl's banner soon retired so far back, that Erling and his men scaled the ridge. The battle lasted but a short time before the earl's men fled to the forest, which they had close behind them. This was told Earl Sigurd, and his men bade him fly; but he replied, "Let us on while we can." And his men went bravely on, and cut down on all sides. In this tumult fell Earl Sigurd and Jon Sveinson, and nearly sixty men. Erling lost few men, and pursued the fugitives to the forest. There Erling halted his troops, and turned back. He came just as the king's slaves were about stripping the clothes off Earl Sigurd, who was not quite lifeless. He had put his sword in the sheath, and it lay by his side. Erling took it, struck the slaves with it, and drove them away. Then Erling, with his troops, returned, and sat down in Tunsberg. Seven days after Earl Sigurd's fall Erling's men took Eindride Unge prisoner, and killed him, with all his ship's crew.

15. MARKUS OF SKOG, AND SIGURD SIGURDSON.

Markus of Skog, and King Sigurd, his foster-son, rode down to Viken towards spring, and there got a ship; but when Erling heard it he went eastwards against them, and they met at Konungahella. Markus fled with his followers to the island Hising; and there the country people of Hising came down in swarms, and placed themselves in Markus's and Sigurd's array. Erling and his men rowed to the shore; but Markus's men shot at them. Then Erling said to his people, "Let us take their ships, but not go up to fight with a land force. The Hisingers are a bad set to quarrel with,—hard, and without understanding. They will keep this troop but a little while among them, for Hising is but a small spot." This was done: they took the ships, and brought them over to Konungahella. Markus and his men went up to the forest district, from which they in-

tended to make assaults, and they had spies out on both sides. Erling had many men-at-arms with him, whom he brought from other districts, and they made attacks on each other in turn.

16. BEGINNING OF ARCHBISHOP EYSTEIN.

Eystein, a son of Erlend Himaide, was selected to be archbishop, after Archbishop Jon's death; and he was consecrated the same year King Inge was killed. Now when Archbishop Eystein came to his see, he made himself beloved by all the country, as an excellent active man of high birth. The Throndhjem people, in particular, received him with pleasure; for most of the great people in the Throndhjem district were connected with the archbishop by relationship or other connection, and all were his friends. The archbishop brought forward a request to the bondes in a speech, in which he set forth the great want of money for the see, and also how much greater improvement of the revenues would be necessary to maintain it suitably, as it was now of much more importance than formerly when the bishop's see was first established. He requested of the bondes that they should give him, for determining law-suits, an ore of silver value, instead of what they had before paid, which was an ore of judgment money, of that kind which was paid to the king in judging cases; and the difference between the two kinds of ore was, that the ore he desired was a half greater than the other. By help of the archbishop's relations and friends, and his own activity, this was carried; and it was fixed by law in all the Throndhjem district, and in all the districts belonging to his archbishopric.

17. OF MARKUS AND KING SIGURD.

When Sigurd and Markus lost their ships in the Gaut river, and saw they could get no hold on Erling, they went to the Uplands, and proceeded by land north to Throndhjem. Sigurd was received there joyfully, and chosen king at an Eyra-thing; and many gallant men, with their sons, attached themselves to his party. They fitted out ships, rigged them for a voyage, and proceeded when summer came southwards to More, and took up all the royal revenues wheresoever they came. At this time the following lendenmen were appointed in Bergen for the defence of the country:—Nikolas Sigurdson, Nokve Palson, and several military leaders; as Thorolf Dryl, Thorbjorn Gjaldkere, and many others. As Markus and Sigurd sailed south, they heard that Erling's men were numerous in Bergen; and therefore they sailed outside the coast-rocks, and southwards past Bergen. It was generally remarked, that Markus's men always got a fair wind, wherever they wished to sail to.

18. MARKUS AND KING SIGURD KILLED.

As soon as Erling Skakke heard that Sigurd and Markus had sailed southwards, he hastened to Viken, and drew together an armed force; and he soon had a great many men, and many stout ships. But when he came farther in Viken, he met with a strong contrary wind, which kept him there in port the whole summer. Now when Sigurd and Markus came east to Lister, they heard that Erling had a great force in Viken; so they turned to the north again. But when they reached Hordaland, with the intention of sailing to Bergen, and came opposite the town, Nikolas and his men rowed out against them, with more men and larger ships than they had. Sigurd and Markus saw no other way of escaping but to row away southwards. Some of them went out to sea, others got south to the sound, and some got into the Fjords. Markus, and some people with him, sprang upon an isle called Skarpa. Nikolas and his men took their ships, gave Jon Halkelson and a few others quarter, but killed the most of them they could get hold of. Some days after Eindride Heidafylja found Sigurd and Markus, and they were brought to Bergen. Sigurd was beheaded outside of Grafdal, and Markus and another man were hanged at Hvarfsnes. This took place on Michaelmas day (September 29, 1163), and the band which had followed them was dispersed.

19. ERLING AND THE PEOPLE OF HISING ISLE.

Frírek Keina and Bjarne the Bad, Onund Simonson and Ornolf Skorpa had rowed out to sea with some ships, and sailed outside along the land to the east. Wheresoever they came to the land they plundered, and killed Erling's friends. Now when Erling heard that Sigurd and Markus were killed, he gave leave to the lændemen and people of the levy to return home; but he himself, with his men, set his course eastward across the Folden fjord, for he heard of Markus's men there. Erling sailed to Konungahella, where he remained the autumn; and in the first week of winter Erling went out to the island Hising with his men, and called the bondes to a Thing. When the Hising people came to the Thing, Erling laid his law-suit against them for having joined the bands of Sigurd and Markus, and having raised men against him. Assur was the name of one of the greatest of the bondes on the island, and he answered Erling on account of the others. The Thing was long assembled; but at the close the bondes gave the case into Erling's own power, and he appointed a meeting in the town within one week, and named fifteen bondes who should appear there. When they came, he condemned them to pay a penalty of 300 head of cattle; and the bondes returned home ill pleased at this sentence. Soon after the Gaut river was frozen, and Erling's ships were fast in the ice; and the bondes kept back the mulct, and lay assembled for some time. Erling made a Yule feast in the town; but the Hising people had joint-feasts with each other, and kept under arms during Yule. The night after the fifth day of Yule Erling went up to Hising, surrounded Assur's house, and burnt him in it. He killed one hundred men in all, burnt three houses, and then returned to Konungahella. The bondes came then, according to agreement, to pay the mulct.

20. DEATH OF FRÍREK KEINA AND BJARNE.

Erling Skakke made ready to sail in spring as soon as he could get his ships afloat for ice, and sailed from Konungahella; for he heard that those who had formerly been Markus's friends were marauding in the north of Viken. Erling sent out spies to learn their doings, searched for them, and found them lying in a harbour. Onund Simonson and Ornolf Skorpa escaped, but Frírek Keina and Bjarne the Bad were taken, and many of their followers were killed. Erling had Frírek bound to an anchor and thrown overboard; and for that deed Erling was much detested in the Throndhjem country, for the most powerful men there were relatives of Frírek. Erling ordered Bjarne the Bad to be hanged; and he uttered, according to his custom, many dreadful imprecations during his execution. Thorbjorn Skakkaskald tells of this business:—

East of the Fjord beyond the land,
Unnoticed by the pirate band,
Erling stole on them ere they knew,
And seized and killed all Keina's crew.
Keina, fast to an anchor bound,
Was thrown into the deep-blue Sound;
And Bjarne swung high on gallows-tree,
A sight all good men loved to see.

Onund and Ornolf, with the band that had escaped, fled to Denmark; but were sometimes in Gautland, or in Viken.

21. CONFERENCE BETWEEN ERLING AND EYSTEIN.

Erling Skakke sailed after this to Tunsberg, and remained there very long in spring (A.D. 1164); but when summer came he proceeded north to Bergen, where at that time a great many people were assembled. There was the legate from Rome, Stephanus; the Archbishop Eystein, and other bishops of the country. There was also Bishop Brand, who was consecrated bishop of Iceland, and Jon Loptson, a daughter's son of King Magnus Barefoot; and on this occasion King Magnus and Jon's other relations acknowledged the relationship with him.

Archbishop Eystein and Erling Skakke often conversed together in private; and, among other things, Erling asked one day, "Is it true, sir, what people tell me, that you have raised the value

of the ore upon the people north in Throndhjem, in the law cases in which money-fees are paid you?"

"It is so," said the archbishop, "that the bondes have allowed me an advance on the ore of law casualties; but they did it willingly, and without any kind of compulsion, and have thereby added to their honour for God and the income of the bishopric."

Erling replies, "Is this according to the law of the holy Olaf? or have you gone to work more arbitrarily in this than is written down in the lawbook?"

The archbishop replies, "King Olaf the Holy fixed the laws, to which he received the consent and affirmative of the people; but it will not be found in his laws that it is forbidden to increase God's right."

Erling: "If you augment your right, you must assist us to augment as much the king's right."

The archbishop: "Thou hast already augmented enough thy son's power and dominion; and if I have exceeded the law in taking an increase of the ore from the Throndhjem people, it is, I think, a much greater breach of the law that one is king over the country who is not a king's son, and which has neither any support in the law, nor in any precedent here in the country."

Erling: "When Magnus was chosen king, it was done with your knowledge and consent, and also of all the other bishops here in the country."

Archbishop: "You promised then, Erling, that provided we gave our consent to electing Magnus king, you would, on all occasions, and with all your power, strengthen God's rights."

Erling: "I may well admit that I have promised to preserve and strengthen God's commands and the laws of the land with all my power, and with the king's strength; and now I consider it to be much more advisable, instead of accusing each other of a breach of our promises, to hold firmly by the agreement entered into between us. Do you strengthen Magnus in his dominion, according to what you have promised; and I will, on my part, strengthen your power in all that can be of advantage or honour."

The conversation now took a more friendly turn; and Erling said, "Although Magnus was not chosen king according to what has been the old custom of this country, yet can you with your power give him consecration as king, as God's law prescribes, by anointing the king to sovereignty; and although I be neither a king, nor of kingly race, yet most of the kings, within my recollection, have not known the laws or the constitution of the country so well as I do. Besides, the mother of King Magnus is the daughter of a king and queen born in lawful wedlock, and Magnus is son of a queen and a lawfully married wife. Now if you will give him royal consecration, no man can take royalty from him. William Bastard was not a king's son; but he was consecrated and crowned king of England, and the royalty in England has ever since remained with his race, and all have been crowned. Svein Ulfson was not a king's son in Denmark, and still he was a crowned king, and his sons likewise, and all his descendants have been crowned kings. Now we have here in Norway an archiepiscopal seat, to the glory and honour of the country; let us also have a crowned king, as well as the Danes and Englishmen."

Erling and the archbishop afterwards talked often of this matter, and they were quite agreed. Then the archbishop brought the business before the legate, and got him easily persuaded to give his consent. Thereafter the archbishop called together the bishops, and other learned men, and explained the subject to them. They all replied in the same terms, that they would follow the counsels of the archbishop, and all were eager to promote the consecration as soon as the archbishop pleased.

22. KING MAGNUS'S CONSECRATION.

Erling Skakke then had a great feast prepared in the king's house. The large hall was covered with costly cloth and tapestry, and adorned with great expense. The court-men and all the attendants were there entertained, and there were numerous guests, and many chiefs. Then King Magnus received the royal consecration from the Archbishop Eystein; and at the consecration there were five other bishops and the legate, besides a number of other clergy. Erling Skakke, and with him twelve other lændemen, ad-

ministered to the king the oath of the law; and the day of the consecration the king and Erling had the legate, the archbishop, and all the other bishops as guests; and the feast was exceedingly magnificent, and the father and son distributed many great presents. King Magnus was then eight years of age, and had been king for three years.

23. KING VALDEMAR'S EMBASSY.

When the Danish king Valdemar heard the news from Norway that Magnus was become king of the whole country, and all the other parties in the country were rooted out, he sent his men with a letter to King Magnus and Erling, and reminded them of the agreement which Erling had entered into, under oath, with King Valdemar, of which we have spoken before; namely, that Viken from the east to Rygiarbit should be ceded to King Valdemar, if Magnus became the sole king of Norway. When the ambassadors came forward and showed Erling the letter of the Danish king, and he heard the Danish king's demand upon Norway, he laid it before the other chiefs by whose counsels he usually covered his acts. All, as one man, replied that the Danes should never hold the slightest portion of Norway; for never had things been worse in the land than when the Danes had power in it. The ambassadors of the Danish king were urgent with Erling for an answer, and desired to have it decided; but Erling begged them to proceed with him east to Viken, and said he would give his final answer when he had met with the men of most understanding and influence in Viken.

24. ERLING AND THE PEOPLE OF VIKEN.

Erling Skakke proceeded in autumn to Viken, and stayed in Tunsberg, from whence he sent people to Sarpsborg to summon a Thing of four districts; and then Erling went there with his people.

When the Thing was seated Erling made a speech in which he explained the resolutions which had been settled upon between him and the Danish king, the first time he collected troops against his enemies. "I will," said Erling, "keep faithfully the agreement which we then entered into with the king, if it be your will and consent, bondes, rather to serve the Danish king than the king who is now consecrated and crowned king of this country."

The bondes replied thus to Erling's speech: "Never will we become the Danish king's men, as long as one of us Viken men is in life." And the whole assembly, with shouts and cries, called on Erling to keep the oath he had taken to defend his son's dominions, "should we even all follow thee to battle." And so the Thing was dissolved.

The ambassadors of the Danish king then returned home, and told the issue of their errand. The Danes abused Erling, and all Northmen, and declared that evil only proceeded from them; and the report was spread, that in Spring the Danish king would send out an army and lay waste Norway. Erling returned in autumn north to Bergen, stayed there all winter, and gave their pay to his people.

25. LETTERS OF THE THRONDHJEM PEOPLE.

The same winter (A.D. 1165) some Danish people came by land through the Uplands, saying they were to go, as was then the general practice, to the holy King Olaf's festival. But when they came to the Throndhjem country, they went to many men of influence, and told their business; which was, that the Danish king had sent them to desire their friendship, and consent, if he came to the country, promising them both power and money. With this verbal message came also the Danish king's letter and seal, and a message to the Throndhjem people that they should send back their letters and seals to him. They did so, and the most of them received well the Danish king's message; whereupon the messengers returned back towards Lent. Erling was in Bergen; and towards spring Erling's friends told him the loose reports they had heard by some merchant vessels that had arrived from Throndhjem, that the Throndhjem people were in hostility openly against him; and had declared that if Erling came to Throndhjem, he should never pass Agdanes in life. Erling said this was mere folly and idle talk.

Erling now made it known that he would go to Unarheim to the Gangdag-thing; and ordered a cutter of twenty rowing benches to be fitted out, a boat of fifteen benches, and a provision-ship. When the vessels were ready, there came a strong southerly gale. On the Thursday of the Ascension week, Erling called his people by sound of trumpet to their departure; but the men were loath to leave the town, and were ill inclined to row against the wind. Erling brought his vessels to Biskupshavn. "Well," said Erling, "since ye are so unwilling to row against the wind, raise the mast, hoist the sails, and let the ship go north." They did so, and sailed northwards both day and night. On Wednesday, in the evening, they sailed in past Agdanes, where they found a fleet assembled of many merchant vessels, rowing craft, and boats, all going towards the town to the celebration of the festival,—some before them, some behind them—so that the townspeople paid no attention to the long-ships coming.

26. ERLING AND THE PEOPLE OF THRONDHJEM.

Erling came to the town just as vespers was being sung in Christ church. He and his men ran into the town, to where it was told them that the lenderman, Alf Rode, a son of Ottar Birthing, was still sitting at table, and drinking with his men. Erling fell upon them; and Alf was killed, with almost all his men. Few other men were killed; for they had almost all gone to church, as this was the night before Christ's Ascension-day. In the morning early, Erling called all the people by sound of trumpet to a Thing out upon Evrar. At the Thing Erling laid a charge against the Throndhjem people, accusing them of intending to betray the country, and take it from the king; and named Bard Standale, Pal Andreason, and Razabard, who then presided over the town's affairs, and many others. They, in their defence, denied the accusation; but Erling's writer stood up, produced many letters with seals, and asked if they acknowledged their seals which they had sent to the Danish king; and thereupon the letters were read. There was also a Danish man with Erling who had gone with the letters in winter, and whom Erling for that purpose had taken into his service. He told to these men the very words which each of them had used. "And you, Razabard, spoke, striking your breast; and the very words you used were, 'Out of this breast are all these counsels produced.'" Bard replied, "I was wrong in the head, sirs, when I spoke so." There was now nothing to be done but to submit the case entirely to the sentence Erling might give upon it. He took great sums of money from many as fines, and condemned all those who had been killed as lawless, and their deeds as lawless; making their deaths thereby not subject to mulct. Then Erling returned south to Bergen.

27. KING VALDEMAR'S EXPEDITION TO NORWAY.

The Danish king Valdemar assembled in spring (A.D. 1165) a great army, and proceeded with it north to Viken. As soon as he reached the dominions of the king of Norway, the bondes assembled in a great multitude. The king advanced peacefully; but when they came to the mainland, the people shot at them even when there were only two or three together, from which the ill-will of the country people towards them was evident. When they came to Tunsberg, King Valdemar summoned a Hauga-thing; but nobody attended it from the country parts. Then Valdemar spoke thus to his troops: "It is evident that all the country-people are against us; and now we have two things to choose: the one to go through the country, sword in hand, sparing neither man nor beast; the other is to go back without effecting our object. And it is more my inclination to go with the army to the East against the heathens, of whom we have enough before us in the East country, than to kill Christian people here, although they have well deserved it." All the others had a greater desire for a foray; but the king ruled, and they all returned back to Denmark without effecting their purpose. They pillaged, however, all around in the distant islands, or where the king was not in the neighbourhood. They then returned south to Denmark without doing anything.

28. ERLING'S EXPEDITION TO JUTLAND.

As soon as Erling heard that a Danish force had come to Viken, he ordered a levy through all the land, both of men and ships, so that there was a great assemblage of men in arms; and with this force he proceeded eastward along the coast. But when he came to Lidandisnes, he heard that the Danish army had returned south to Denmark, after plundering all around them in Viken. Then Erling gave all the people of the levy permission to return home; but he himself and some lenders, with many vessels, sailed to Jutland after the Danes. When they came to a place called Dyrsa, the Danes who had returned from the expedition lay there with many ships. Erling gave them battle, and there was a fight, in which the Danes soon fled with the loss of many people; and Erling and his men plundered the ships and the town, and made a great booty, with which they returned to Norway. Thereafter, for a time, there was hostility between Norway and Denmark.

29. ERLING'S EXPEDITION TO DENMARK.

The princess Krisfin went south in autumn (A.D. 1165) to Denmark, to visit her relation King Valdemar, who was her cousin. The king received her kindly, and gave her fiefs in his kingdom, so that she could support her household well. She often conversed with the king, who was remarkably kind towards her. In the spring following (A.D. 1166) Kristin sent to Erling, and begged him to pay a visit to the Danish king, and enter into a peace with him. In summer Erling was in Viken, where he fitted out a long-ship, manned it with his finest lads, and sailed (a single ship) over to Jutland. When he heard that the Danish king Valdemar was in Randaros, Erling sailed thither, and came to the town just as the king sat at the dinner-table, and most of the people were taking their meal. When his people had made themselves ready according to Erling's orders, set up the ship-tents, and made fast the ship, Erling landed with twelve men, all in armour, with hats over their helmets, and swords under their cloaks. They went to the king's lodging, where the doors stood open, and the dishes were being carried in. Erling and his people went in immediately, and drew up in front of the high-seat. Erling said, "Peace and safe conduct we desire, king, both here and to return home."

The king looked at him, and said, "Art thou here, Erling?"

He replies, "Here is Erling; and tell us, at once, if we shall have peace and safe conduct."

There were eighty of the king's men in the room, but all unarmed. The king replies, "Peace ye shall have, Erling, according to thy desire; for I will not use force or villainy against a man who comes to visit me."

Erling then kissed the king's hand, went out, and down to his ship. Erling stayed at Randaros some time with the king, and they talked about terms of peace between them and between the countries. They agreed that Erling should remain as hostage with the Danish king; and that Asbjorn Snara, Bishop Absalon's brother, should go to Norway as hostage on the other part.

30. KING VALDEMAR AND ERLING.

In a conference which King Valdemar and Erling once had together. Erling said, "Sire, it appears to me likely that it might lead to a peace between the countries if you got that part of Norway which was promised you in our agreement; but if it should be so, what chief would you place over it? Would he be a Dane?"

"No," replied the king; "no Danish chief would go to Norway, where he would have to manage an obstinate hard people, when he has it so easy here with me."

Erling: "It was on that very consideration that I came here; for I would not on any account in the world deprive myself of the advantage of your friendship. In days of old other men, Hakon Ivarson and Fin Arnason, came also from Norway to Denmark, and your predecessor, King Svein, made them both earls. Now I am not a man of less power in Norway than they were then, and my influence is not less than theirs; and the king gave them the province of Halland to rule over, which he himself had and owned before. Now it appears to me, sire, that you, if I become your man and vassal, can allow me to hold of you the fief which my son

Magnus will not deny me, by which I will be bound in duty, and ready, to undertake all the service belonging to that title."

Erling spoke such things, and much more in the same strain, until it came at last to this, that Erling became Valdemar's man and vassal; and the king led Erling to the earl's seat one day, and gave him the title of earl, and Viken as a fief under his rule. Earl Erling went thereafter to Norway, and was earl afterwards as long as he lived; and also the peace with the Danish king was afterwards always preserved. Earl Erling had four sons by his concubines. The one was called Hreidar, the next Ogmund; and these by two different mothers: the third was called Fin; the fourth Sigurd: these were younger, and their mother was Asa the Fair. The princess Kristin and Earl Erling had a daughter called Ragnhild, who was married to Jon Thorbergson of Randaberg. Kristin went away from the country with a man called Grim Rusle; and they went to Constantinople, where they were for a time, and had some children.

31. BEGINNING OF OLAF.

Olaf, a son of Gudbrand Skafhaug, and Maria, a daughter of King Eystein Magnuson, were brought up in the house of Sigurd Agn-hot in the Uplands. While Earl Erling was in Denmark (A.D. 1166), Olaf and his foster-father gathered a troop together, and many Upland people joined them; and Olaf was chosen king by them. They went with their bands through the Uplands, and sometimes down to Viken, and sometimes east to the forest settlements; but never came on board of ships. Now when, Earl Erling got news of this troop, he hastened to Viken with his forces; and was there in summer in his ships, and in Oslo in autumn (A.D. 1167) and kept Yule there. He had spies up the country after this troop, and went himself, along with Orm, the King-brother, up the country to follow them. Now when they came to a lake called.... they took all the vessels that were upon the lake.

32. OF ERLING.

The priest who performed divine service at a place called Rydiokul, close by the lake, invited the earl to a feast at Candlemas. The earl promised to come; and thinking it would be good to hear mass there, he rowed with his attendants over the lake the night before Candlemas day. But the priest had another plan on hand. He sent men to bring Olaf news of Earl Erling's arrival. The priest gave Erling strong drink in the evening, and let him have an excessive quantity of it. When the earl wished to lie down and sleep, the beds were made ready in the drinking-room; but when they had slept a short time the earl awoke, and asked if it was not the hour for matins. The priest replied, that only a small part of the night was gone, and told him to sleep in peace. The earl replied, "I dream of many things to-night, and I sleep ill." He slumbered again, but awoke soon, and told the priest to get up and sing mass. The priest told the earl to sleep, and said it was but midnight. Then the earl again lay down, slept a little while, and, springing out of bed, ordered his men to put on their clothes. They did so; took their weapons, went to the church, and laid their arms outside while the priest was singing matins.

33. BATTLE AT RYDIOKUL.

As Olaf got the message in the evening, they travelled in the night six miles, which people considered an extraordinarily long march. They arrived at Rydiokul while the priest was still singing mass, and it was pitch-dark. Olaf and his men went into the room, raised a war-shout, and killed some of the earl's men who had not gone to the early mass. Now when Erling and his men heard the war-shout, they ran to their weapons, and hastened down to their ships. Olaf and his men met them at a fence, at which there was a sharp conflict. Erling and his men retreated along the fence, which protected them. Erling had far fewer men, and many of them had fallen, and still more were wounded. What helped Earl Erling and his men the most was, that Olaf's men could not distinguish them, it was so dark; and the earl's men were always drawing down to their ships. Are Thorgeirson, father of Bishop Gudmund fell there, and many other of Erling's court-men. Erling himself was wounded in the left side; but some say he did

it himself in drawing his sword. Orm the King-brother was also severely wounded; and with great difficulty they escaped to their ships, and instantly pushed off from land. It was generally considered as a most unlucky meeting for Olaf's people, as Earl Erling was in a manner sold into their hands, if they had proceeded with common prudence. He was afterwards called Olaf the Unlucky; but others called his people Hat-lads. They went with their bands through the Uplands as before. Erling again went down to Viken to his ships, and remained there all summer. Olaf was in the Uplands, and sometimes east in the forest districts, where he and his troop remained all the next winter (A.D. 1168).

34. BATTLE AT STANGAR.

The following spring the Hat-lads went down to Viken, and raised the king's taxes all around, and remained there long in summer. When Earl Erling heard this, he hastened with his troops to meet them in Viken, and fell in with them east of the Fjord, at a place called Stangar; where they had a great battle, in which Erling was victorious. Sigurd Agnhot, and many others of Olaf's men, fell there; but Olaf escaped by flight, went south to Denmark, and was all winter (A.D. 1169) in Alaborg in Jutland. The following spring Olaf fell into an illness which ended in death, and he was buried in the Maria church; and the Danes call him a saint.

35. HARALD'S DEATH.

King Magnus had a lenderman called Nikolas Kufung, who was a son of Pal Skaptason. He took Harald prisoner, who called himself a son of King Sigurd Haraldson and the princess Kristin, and a brother of King Magnus by the mother's side. Nikolas brought Harald to Bergen, and delivered him into Earl Erling's hands. It was Erling's custom when his enemies came before him, that he either said nothing to them, or very little, and that in all gentleness, when he had determined to put them to death; or rose with furious words against them, when he intended to spare their lives. Erling spoke but little to Harald, and many, therefore, suspected his intentions; and some begged King Magnus to put in a good word for Harald with the earl; and the king did so. The earl replies, "Thy friends advise thee badly. Thou wouldst govern this kingdom but a short time in peace and safety, if thou wert to follow the counsels of the heart only." Earl Erling ordered Harald to be taken to Nordnes, where he was beheaded.

36. EYSTEIN EYSTEINSON AND THE BIRKEBEINS.

There was a man called Eystein, who gave himself out for a son of King Eystein Haraldson. He was at this time young, and not full grown. It is told of him that he one summer appeared in Svithjod, and went to Earl Birger Brosa, who was then married to Brigida, Eystein's aunt, a daughter of King Harald Gille. Eystein explained his business to him, and asked their assistance. Both Earl Birger and his wife listened to him in a friendly way, and promised him their confidence, and he stayed with them a while. Earl Birger gave him some assistance of men, and a good sum for travelling expenses; and both promised him their friendship on his taking leave. Thereafter Eystein proceeded north into Norway (A.D. 1174), and when he came down to Viken people flocked to him in crowds; and Eystein was there proclaimed king, and he remained in Viken in winter. As they were very poor in money, they robbed all around, wherefore the lendermen and bondes raised men against them; and being thus overpowered by numbers, they fled away to the forests and deserted hill grounds, where they lived for a long time. Their clothes being worn out, they wound the bark of the birch-tree about their legs, and thus were called by the bondes Birkebeins. They often rushed down upon the settled districts, pushed on here or there, and made an assault where they did not find many people to oppose them. They had several battles with the bondes with various success; and the Birkebeins held three battles in regular array, and gained the victory in them all. At Krokaskog they had nearly made an unlucky expedition, for a great number of bondes and men-at-arms were assembled there against them; but the Birkebeins felled brushwood across the roads, and retired into the forest. They were two years (A.D.

1175-1176) in Viken before they showed themselves in the northern parts of the country.

37. BIRKEBEINS, KING EYSTEIN, AND SKAKKE.

Magnus had been king for thirteen years when the Birkebeins first made their appearance. They got themselves ships in the third summer (A.D. 1176), with which they sailed along the coast gathering goods and men. They were first in Viken; but when summer advanced they proceeded northwards, and so rapidly that no news preceded them until they came to Throndhjem. The Birkebeins' troop consisted principally of hill-men and Elfgrims, and many were from Thelemark; and all were well armed. Their king, Eystein, was a handsome man, and with a little but good countenance; and he was not of great stature, for his men called him Eystein Meyla. King Magnus and Earl Erling were in Bergen when the Birkebeins sailed past it to the north; but they did not hear of them.

Earl Erling was a man of great understanding and power, an excellent leader in war, and an able and prudent ruler of the country; but he had the character of being cruel and severe. The cause of this was principally that he never allowed his enemies to remain in the country, even when they prayed to him for mercy; and therefore many joined the bands which were collected against him. Erling was a tall strong-made man, somewhat short-necked and high-shouldered; had a long and sharp countenance of a light complexion, and his hair became very grey. He bore his head a little on one side; was free and agreeable in his manners. He wore the old fashion of clothes,—long body-pieces and long arms to his coats, foreign cloak, and high shoes. He made the king wear the same kind of dress in his youth; but when he grew up, and acted for himself, he dressed very sumptuously.

King Magnus was of a light turn of mind, full of jokes; a great lover of mirth, and not less of women.

38. OF NIKOLAS.

Nikolas was a son of Sigurd Hranason and of Skialdvor, a daughter of Brynjolf Ulfalde, and a sister of Haldor Brynjolfson by the father's side, and of King Magnus Barefoot by the mother's side. Nikolas was a distinguished chief, who had a farm at Ongul in Halogaland, which was called Steig. Nikolas had also a house in Nidaros, below Saint Jon's church, where Thorgeir the scribe lately dwelt. Nikolas was often in the town, and was president of the townspeople. Skialdvor, Nikolas's daughter, was married to Eirik Arnason, who was also a lenderman.

39. OF EIRIK AND NIKOLAS.

As the people of the town were coming from matins the last day of Marymas (September 8th), Eirik came up to Nikolas, and said, "Here are some fishermen come from the sea, who report that some long-ships are sailing into the fjord; and people conjecture that these may be the Birkebeins. It would be advisable to call the townspeople together with the war-horns, to meet under arms out on Eyrar."

Nikolas replies, "I don't go after fishermen's reports; but I shall send out spies to the fjord, and in the meantime hold a Thing to-day."

Eirik went home; but when they were ringing to high mass, and Nikolas was going to church, Eirik came to hint again, and said, "I believe the news to be true; for here are men who say they saw them under sail; and I think it would be most advisable to ride out of town, and gather men with arms; for it appears to me the townspeople will be too few."

Nikolas replies, "Thou art mixing everything together; let us first hear mass, and then take our resolution."

Nikolas then went into the church. When the mass was over Eirik went to Nikolas, and said, "My horses are saddled; I will ride away."

Nikolas replies, "Farewell, then: we will hold a Thing to-day on the Eyrar, and examine what force of men there may be in the town."

Eirik rode away, and Nikolas went to his house, and then to dinner.

40. THE FALL OF NIKOLAS.

The meat was scarcely put on the table, when a man came into the house to tell Nikolas that the Birkebeins were roving up the river. Then Nikolas called to his men to take their weapons. When they were armed Nikolas ordered them to go up into the loft. But that was a most imprudent step; for if they had remained in the yard, the townspeople might have come to their assistance; but now the Birkebeins filled the whole yard, and from thence scrambled from all sides up to the loft. They called to Nikolas, and offered him quarter, but he refused it. Then they attacked the loft. Nikolas and his men defended themselves with bow-shot, hand-shot, and stones of the chimney; but the Birkebeins hewed down the houses, broke up the loft, and returned shot for shot from bow or hand. Nikolas had a red shield in which were gilt nails, and about it was a border of stars. The Birkebeins shot so that the arrows went in up to the arrow feather. Then said Nikolas, "My shield deceives me." Nikolas and a number of his people fell, and his death was greatly lamented. The Birkebeins gave all the towns-people their lives.

41. EYSTEIN PROCLAIMED KING.

Eystein was then proclaimed king, and all the people submitted to him. He stayed a while in the town, and then went into the interior of the Throndhjem land, where many joined him, and among them Thorfin Svarte of Snos with a troop of people. When the Birkebeins, in the beginning of winter (A.D. 1177), came again into the town, the sons of Gudrun from Saltnes, Jon Ketling, Sigurd, and William, joined them; and when they proceeded afterwards from Nidaros up Orkadal, they could number nearly 2000 men. They afterwards went to the Uplands, and on to Thoten and Hadaland, and from thence to Ringerike, and subdued the country wheresoever they came.

42. THE FALL OF KING EYSTEIN.

King Magnus went eastward to Viken in autumn with a part of his men and with him Orm, the king's brother; but Earl Erling remained behind in Bergen to meet the Berkebeins in case they took the sea route. King Magnus went to Tunsberg, where he and Orm held their Yule (A.D. 1177). When King Magnus heard that the Birkebeins were up in Re, the king and Orm proceeded thither with their men. There was much snow, and it was dreadfully cold. When they came to the farm they left the beaten track on the road, and drew up their array outside of the fence, and trod a path through the snow with their men, who were not quite 1500 in number. The Birkebeins were dispersed here and there in other farms, a few men in each house. When they perceived King Magnus's army they assembled, and drew up in regular order; and as they thought their force was larger than his, which it actually was, they resolved to fight; but when they hurried forward to the road only a few could advance at a time, which broke their array, and the men fell who first advanced upon the beaten way. Then the Birkebeins' banner was cut down; those who were nearest gave way and some took to flight. King Magnus's men pursued them, and killed one after the other as they came up with them. Thus the Birkebeins could never form themselves in array; and being exposed to the weapons of the enemy singly, many of them fell, and many fled. It happened here, as it often does, that although men be brave and gallant, if they have once been defeated and driven to flight, they will not easily be brought to turn round. Now the main body of the Birkebeins began to fly, and many fell; because Magnus's men killed all they could lay hold of, and not one of them got quarter. The whole body became scattered far and wide. Eystein in his flight ran into a house, and begged for his life, and that the bonde would conceal him; but the bonde killed him, and then went to King Magnus, whom he found at Rafnnes, where the king was in a room warming himself by the fire along with many people. Some went for the corpse, and bore it into the room, where the king told the people to come and inspect the body. A man was sitting on a bench in the corner, and he was a Birkebein,

but nobody had observed him; and when he saw and recognised his chief's body he sprang up suddenly and actively, rushed out upon the floor, and with an axe he had in his hands made a blow at King Magnus's neck between the shoulders. A man saw the axe swinging, and pulled the king to a side, by which the axe struck lower in the shoulder, and made a large wound. He then raised the axe again, and made a blow at Orm, the King-brother, who was lying on a bench, and the blow was directed at both legs; but Orm seeing the man about to kill him, drew in his feet instantly, threw them over his head, and the blow fell on the bench, in which the axe stuck fast; and then the blows at the Birkebein came so thick that he could scarcely fall to the ground. It was discovered that he had dragged his entrails after him over the floor; and this man's bravery was highly praised. King Magnus's men followed the fugitives, and killed so many that they were tired of it. Thorfin of Snos, and a very great number of Throndhjem people, fell there.

43. OF THE BIRKEBEINS.

The faction which called itself the Birkebeins had gathered together in great numbers. They were a hardy people, and the boldest of men under arms; but wild, and going forward madly when they had a strong force. They had few men in their faction who were good counsellors, or accustomed to rule a country by law, or to head an army; and if there were such men among them who had more knowledge, yet the many would only allow of those measures which they liked, trusting always to their numbers and courage. Of the men who escaped many were wounded, and had lost both their clothes and their arms, and were altogether destitute of money. Some went east to the borders, some went all the way east to Svithjod; but the most of them went to Thelemark, where they had their families. All took flight, as they had no hope of getting their lives from King Magnus or Earl Erling.

44. OF KING MAGNUS ERLINGSON.

King Magnus then returned to Tunsberg, and got great renown by this victory; for it had been an expression in the mouths of all, that Earl Erling was the shield and support of his son and himself. But after gaining a victory over so strong and numerous a force with fewer troops, King Magnus was considered by all as surpassing other leaders, and that he would become a warrior as much greater than his father, Earl Erling, as he was younger.

Eirik the Red's Saga

1. Olaf, who was called Olaf the White, was styled a warrior king. He was the son of King Ingjald, the son of Helgi, the son of Olaf, the son of Gudred, the son of Halfdan Whiteleg, king of the Uplands (in Norway). He led a harrying expedition of sea-rovers into the west, and conquered Dublin, in Ireland, and Dublinshire, over which he made himself king. He married Aud the Deep-minded, daughter of Ketil Flatnose, son of Bjorn the Ungartered, a noble man from Norway. Their son was named Thorstein the Red. Olaf fell in battle in Ireland, and then Aud and Thorstein went into the Sudreyjar (the Hebrides). There Thorstein married Thorid, daughter of Eyvind the Easterling, sister of Helgi the Lean; and they had many children. Thorstein became a warrior king, and formed an alliance with Earl Sigurd the Great, son of Eystein the Rattler. They conquered Caithness, Sutherland, Ross, and Moray, and more than half Scotland. Over these Thorstein was king until the Scots plotted against him, and he fell there in battle. Aud was in Caithness when she heard of Thorstein's death. Then she caused a merchant-ship to be secretly built in the wood, and when she was ready, directed her course out into the Orkneys. There she gave in marriage Thorstein the Red's daughter, Gro, who became mother of Grelad, whom Earl Thorfinn, the Skulldcleaver, married. Afterwards Aud set out to seek Iceland, having twenty free men in her ship. Aud came to Iceland, and passed the first winter in Bjarnarhofn (Bjornshaven) with her brother Bjorn. Afterwards she occupied all the Dale country between the Dogurdara (day-meal river) and the Skraumuhlaupsa (river of the giantess's leap), and dwelt at Hvamm. She had prayer meetings at Krossholar (Crosshills), where she caused crosses to be erected, for she was baptised and deeply devoted to the faith. There came with her to Iceland many men worthy of honour, who had been taken captive in sea-roving expeditions to the west, and who were called bondmen. One of these was named Vifil; he was a man of high family, and had been taken captive beyond the western main, and was also called a bondman before Aud set him free. And when Aud granted dwellings to her ship's company, Vifil asked why she gave no abode to him like unto the others. Aud replied, "That it was of no moment to him, for," she said, "he would be esteemed in whatever place he was, as one worthy of honour." She gave him Vifildalr (Vifilsdale), and he dwelt there and married. His sons were Thorbjorn and Thorgeir, promising men, and they grew up in their father's house.

2. There was a man named Thorvald, the son of Asvald, the son of Ulf, the son of Yxna-Thoris. His son was named Eirik. Father and son removed from Jadar (in Norway) to Iceland, because of manslaughters, and occupied land in Hornstrandir, and dwelt at Drangar. There Thorvald died, and Eirik then married Thjodhild, daughter of Jorund, the son of Atli, and of Thorbjorg the Ship-breasted, whom afterwards Thorbjorn, of the Haukadale (Hawkdale) family, married; he it was who dwelt at Eiriksstad after Eirik removed from the north. It is near Vatzhorn. Then did Eirik's thralls cause a landslip on the estate of Valthjof, at Valthjofsstad. Eyjolf the Foul, his kinsman, slew the thralls beside Skeidsbrekkur (slopes of the race-course), above Vatzhorn. In return Eirik slew Eyjolf the Foul; he slew also Hrafn the Dueller, at Leikskalar (play-booths). Gerstein, and Odd of Jorfi, kinsman of Eyjolf, were found willing to follow up his death by a legal prosecution; and then was Eirik banished from Haukadale. He occupied then Brokey and Eyxney, and dwelt at Tradir, in Sudrey, the first winter. At

this time did he lend to Thorgest pillars for seat-stocks, Afterwards Eirik removed into Eyxney, and dwelt at Eiriksstad. He then claimed his pillars, and got them not. Then went Eirik and fetched the pillars from Breidabolstad, and Thorgest went after him. They fought at a short distance from the hay-yard at Drangar, and there fell two sons of Thorgest, and some other men. After that they both kept a large body of men together. Styr gave assistance to Eirik, as also did Eyjolf, of Sviney, Thorbjorn Vifilsson, and the sons of Thorbrand, of Alptafjorðr (Swanfirth). But the sons of Thord Gellir, as also Thorgeir, of Hitardalr (Hotdale), Aslak, of Langadalr (Longdale), and Illugi, his son, gave assistance to Thorgest. Eirik and his people were outlawed at Thorsnes Thing. He prepared a ship in Eiriksavagr (creek), and Eyjolf concealed him in Dimunaravagr while Thorgest and his people sought him among the islands. Eirik said to his people that he purposed to seek for the land which Gunnbjorn, the son of Ulf the Crow, saw when he was driven westwards over the ocean, and discovered Gunnbjarnarsker (Gunnbjorn's rock or skerry). He promised that he would return to visit his friends if he found the land. Thorbjorn, and Eyjolf, and Styr accompanied Eirik beyond the islands. They separated in the most friendly manner, Eirik saying that he would be of the like assistance to them, if he should be able so to be, and they should happen to need him. Then he sailed oceanwards under Snœfellsjökull (snow mountain glacier), and arrived at the glacier called Blaserkr (Blue-shirt); thence he journeyed south to see if there were any inhabitants of the country. He passed the first winter at Eiriksey, near the middle, of the Vestribygd (western settlement). The following spring he proceeded to Eiriksfiordr, and fixed his abode there. During the summer he proceeded into the unpeopled districts in the west, and was there a long time, giving names to the places far and wide. The second winter he passed in Eiriksholmar (isles), off Hvarfsgnupr (peak of disappearance, Cape Farewell); and the third summer he went altogether northwards, to Snœfell and into Hrafnfjorðr (Ravensfirth); considering then that he had come to the head of Eiriksfiordr, he turned back, and passed the third winter in Eiriksey, before the mouth of Eiriksfiordr. Now, afterwards, during the summer, he proceeded to Iceland, and came to Breidafjorðr (Broadfirth). This winter he was with Ingolf, at Holmlatr (Island-litter). During the spring, Thorgest and he fought, and Eirik met with defeat. After that they were reconciled. In the summer Eirik went to live in the land which he had discovered, and which he called Greenland, "Because," said he, "men will desire much the more to go there if the land has a good name."

3. Thorgeir Vifilsson married, and took to wife Arnora, daughter of Einar, from Laugarbrekka (the slope of the hot spring), the son of Sigmund, the son of Ketil-Thistil, who had occupied Thistilsfjorðr. The second daughter of Einar was named Hallveig. Thorbjorn Vifilsson took her to wife, and received with her the land of Laugarbrekka, at Hellisvollr (the cave-hill). To that spot Thorbjorn removed his abode, and became great and worshipful. He was the temple-priest, and had a magnificent estate. Thorbjorn's daughter was Gudrid, the fairest of women, and of peerless nobility in all her conduct. There was a man named Orm, who dwelt at Arnarstapi (eagle-rock), and he had a wife who was named Halldis. He was a well-to-do franklin, a great friend of Thorbjorn, and Gudrid lived at his house as his foster-child for a long time. There was a man named Thorgeir, who dwelt at Thorgeirsfjall

(fell). He was mighty rich in cattle, and had been made a freedman. He had a son, whose name was Einar, a handsome man, well mannered, and a great dandy. Einar, at this time, was a travelling merchant, sailing from land to land with great success; and he always passed his winter either in Iceland or in Norway. Now after this, I have to tell how that one autumn, when Einar was in Iceland, he proceeded with his wares along Snœfellsnes, with the object of selling; he came to Arnarstapi; Orm invited him to stay there, and Einar accepted his invitation, because there was friendship between him and Orm's people, and his wares were earned into a certain outhouse. There he unpacked his merchandise, showed it to Orm and the housemen, and bade Orm take therefrom such things as he would. Orm accepted the offer, and pronounced Einar to be a goodly gallant traveller, and a great favourite of fortune. When now they were busy with the wares, a woman passed before the door of the outhouse; and Einar inquired of Orm who that fair woman might be, passing before the door. "I have not seen her here before," said he. "That is Gudrid, my foster-child," said Orm, "daughter of Thorbjorn the franklin, from Laugarbrekka." "She must be a good match," said Einar; "surely she has not been without suitors who have made proposals for her, has she?" Orm answered, "Proposals have certainly been made, friend, but this treasure is not to be had for the picking up; it is found that she will be particular in her choice, as well as also her father." "Well, in spite of that," quoth Einar, "she is the woman whom I have it in my mind to propose for, and I wish that in this suit of mine you approach her father on my part, and apply yourself to plead diligently for me, for which I shall pay you in return a perfect friendship. The franklin, Thorbjorn, may reflect that our families would be suitably joined in the bonds of affinity; for he is a man in a position of great honour, and owns a fine abode, but his personal property, I am told, is greatly on the decrease; neither I nor my father lack lands or personal property; and if this alliance should be brought about, the greatest assistance would accrue to Thorbjorn." Then answered Orm, "Of a surety I consider myself to be thy friend, and yet am I not willing to bring forward this suit, for Thorbjorn is of a proud mind, and withal a very ambitious man." Einar replied that he desired no other thing than that his offer of marriage should be made known. Orm then consented to undertake his suit, and Einar journeyed south again until he came home. A while after, Thorbjorn had a harvest-feast, as he was bound to have because of his great rank. There were present Orm, from Arnarstapi, and many other friends of Thorbjorn. Orm entered into conversation with Thorbjorn, and told him how that Einar had lately been to see him from Thorgeirsfjall, and was become a promising man. He now began the wooing on behalf of Einar, and said that an alliance between the families would be very suitable on account of certain interests. "There may arise to thee, franklin," he said, "great assistance in thy means from this alliance." But Thorbjorn answered, "I did not expect the like proposal from thee, that I should give my daughter in marriage to the son of a thrall. And so thou perceivest that my substance is decreasing; well, then, my daughter shall not go home with thee, since thou considerest her worthy of so poor a match." Then went Orm home again, and each of the other guests to his own household, and Gudrid remained with her father, and stayed at home that winter.

Now, in the spring, Thorbjorn made a feast to his friends, and a goodly banquet was prepared. There came many guests, and the banquet was of the best. Now, at the banquet, Thorbjorn called for a hearing, and thus spake:—"Here have I dwelt a long time. I have experienced the goodwill of men and their affection towards me, and I consider that our dealings with one another have been mutually agreeable. But now do my money matters begin to bring me uneasiness, although to this time my condition has not been reckoned contemptible. I wish, therefore, to break up my household before I lose my honour; to remove from the country before I disgrace my family. So now I purpose to look after the promises of Eirik the Red, my friend, which he made when we separated at Breidafjördr. I purpose to depart for Greenland in the summer, if events proceed as I could wish." These tidings about this design appeared to the guests to be important, for Thorbjorn had long been beloved by his friends. They felt that he would only have made so public a declaration that it might be held of

no avail to attempt to dissuade him from his purpose. Thorbjorn distributed gifts among the guests, and then the feast was brought to an end, and they departed to their own homesteads. Thorbjorn sold his lands, and bought a ship which had been laid up on shore at the mouth of the Hraunhofn (harbour of the lava field). Thirty men ventured on the expedition with him. There was Orm, from Arnarstapi, and his wife, and those friends of Thorbjorn who did not wish to be separated from him. Then they launched the ship, and set sail with a favourable wind. But when they came out into the open sea the favourable wind ceased, and they experienced great gales, and made but an ill-spiced voyage throughout the summer. In addition to that trouble, there came fever upon the expedition, and Orm died, and Halldis, his wife, and half the company. Then the sea waxed rougher, and they endured much toil and misery in many ways, and only reached Herjolfsnes, in Greenland, at the very beginning of winter. There dwelt at Herjolfsnes the man who was called Thorkell. He was a useful man and most worthy franklin. He received Thorbjorn and all his ship's company for the winter, assisting them in right noble fashion. This pleased Thorbjorn well and his companions in the voyage.

At that time there was a great dearth in Greenland; those who had been out on fishing expeditions had caught little, and some had not returned. There was in the settlement the woman whose name was Thorbjorg. She was a prophetess (spae-queen), and was called Litilvolva (little sybil). She had had nine sisters, and they were all spae-queens, and she was the only one now living. It was a custom of Thorbjorg, in the winter time, to make a circuit, and people invited her to their houses, especially those who had any curiosity about the season, or desired to know their fate; and inasmuch as Thorkell was chief franklin thereabouts, he considered that it concerned him to know when the scarcity which overhung the settlement should cease. He invited, therefore, the spae-queen to his house, and prepared for her a hearty welcome, as was the custom wherever a reception was accorded a woman of this kind. A high seat was prepared for her, and a cushion laid thereon in which were poultry-feathers. Now, when she came in the evening, accompanied by the man who had been sent to meet her, she was dressed in such wise that she had a blue mantle over her, with strings for the neck, and it was inlaid with gems quite down to the skirt. On her neck she had glass beads. On her head she had a black hood of lambskin, lined with ermine. A staff she had in her hand, with a knob thereon; it was ornamented with brass, and inlaid with gems round about the knob. Around her she wore a girdle of soft hair, and therein was a large skin-bag, in which she kept the talismans needful to her in her wisdom. She wore hairy calf-skin shoes on her feet, with long and strong-looking thongs to them, and great knobs of latten at the ends. On her hands she had gloves of ermine-skin, and they were white and hairy within. Now, when she entered, all men thought it their bounden duty to offer her becoming greetings, and these she received according as the men were agreeable to her. The franklin Thorkell took the wise-woman by the hand, and led her to the seat prepared for her. He requested her to cast her eyes over his herd, his household, and his homestead. She remained silent altogether. During the evening the tables were set; and now I must tell you what food was made ready for the spae-queen. There was prepared for her porridge of kid's milk, and hearts of all kinds of living creatures there found were cooked for her. She had a brazen spoon, and a knife with a handle of walrus-tusk, which was mounted with two rings of brass, and the point of it was broken off. When the tables were removed, the franklin Thorkell advanced to Thorbjorg and asked her how she liked his homestead, or the appearance of the men; or how soon she would ascertain that which he had asked, and which the men desired to know. She replied that she would not give answer before the morning, after she had slept there for the night. And when the (next) day was far spent, the preparations were made for her which she required for the exercise of her enchantments. She begged them to bring to her those women who were acquainted with the lore needed for the exercise of the enchantments, and which is known by the name of Weird-songs, but no such women came forward. Then was search made throughout the homestead if any woman were so learned. Then answered Gudrid, "I am not skilled in deep learning, nor am I a wise-woman,

although Halldis, my foster-mother, taught me, in Iceland, the lore which she called *Weird-songs*." "Then art thou wise in good season," answered Thorbjorg; but Gudrid replied, "That lore and the ceremony are of such a kind, that I purpose to be of no assistance therein, because I am a Christian woman." Then answered Thorbjorg, "Thou mightest perchance afford thy help to the men in this company, and yet be none the worse woman than thou wast before; but to Thorkell give I charge to provide here the things that are needful." Thorkell thereupon urged Gudrid to consent, and she yielded to his wishes. The women formed a ring round about, and Thorbjorg ascended the scaffold and the seat prepared for her enchantments. Then sang Gudrid the weird-song in so beautiful and excellent a manner, that to no one there did it seem that he had ever before heard the song in voice so beautiful as now. The spae-queen thanked her for the song. "Many spirits," said she, "have been present under its charm, and were pleased to listen to the song, who before would turn away from us, and grant us no such homage. And now are many things clear to me which before were hidden both from me and others. And I am able this to say, that the dearth will last no longer—the season improving as spring advances. The epidemic of fever which has long oppressed us will disappear quicker than we could have hoped. And thee, Gudrid, will I recompense straightway, for that aid of thine which has stood us in good stead; because thy destiny is now clear to me, and foreseen. Thou shalt make a match here in Greenland, a most honourable one, though it will not be a long-lived one for thee, because thy way lies out to Iceland; and there, shall arise from thee a line of descendants both numerous and goodly, and over the branches of thy family shall shine a bright ray. And so fare thee now well and happily, my daughter." Afterwards the men went to the wise-woman, and each enquired after what he was most curious to know. She was also liberal of her replies, and what she said proved true. After this came one from another homestead after her, and she then went there. Thorbjorn was invited, because he did not wish to remain at home while such heathen worship was performing. The weather soon improved when once spring began, as Thorbjorg had said, Thorbjorn made ready his ship, and went on until he came to Brattahlid (the steep slope). Eirik received him with the utmost cordiality, saying he had done well to come there. Thorbjorn and his family were with him during the winter. And in the following spring Eirik gave to Thorbjorn land at Stokknes, and handsome farm buildings were there built for him, and he dwelt there afterwards.

4. Eirik had a wife who was named Thjodhild, and two sons; the one was named Thorstein, and the other Leif. These sons of Eirik were both promising men. Thorstein was then at home with his father; and there was at that time no man in Greenland who was thought so highly of as he. Leif had sailed to Norway, and was there with King Olaf Tryggvason. Now, when Leif sailed from Greenland during the summer, he and his men were driven out of their course to the Sudreyjar. They were slow in getting a favourable wind from this place, and they stayed there a long time during the summer ... reaching Norway about harvest-tide. He joined the body-guard of King Olaf Tryggvason, and the king formed an excellent opinion of him, and it appeared to him that Leif was a well-bred man. Once upon a time the king entered into conversation with Leif, and asked him, "Dost thou purpose sailing to Greenland in summer?" Leif answered, "I should wish so to do, if it is your will." The king replied, "I think it may well be so; thou shalt go my errand, and preach Christianity in Greenland." Leif said that he was willing to undertake it, but that, for himself, he considered that message a difficult one to proclaim in Greenland. But the king said that he knew no man who was better fitted for the work than he. "And thou shalt carry," said he, "good luck with thee in it." "That can only be," said Leif, "if I carry yours with me." Leif set sail as soon as he was ready. He was tossed about a long time out at sea, and lighted upon lands of which before he had no expectation. There were fields of wild wheat, and the vine-tree in full growth. There were also the trees which were called maples; and they gathered of all this certain tokens; some trunks so large that they were used in house-building. Leif came upon men who had been shipwrecked, and took them home with

him, and gave them sustenance during the winter. Thus did he show his great munificence and his graciousness when he brought Christianity to the land, and saved the shipwrecked crew. He was called Leif the Lucky. Leif reached land in Eiriksfiordr, and proceeded home to Brattahlid. The people received him gladly. He soon after preached Christianity and catholic truth throughout the land, making known to the people the message of King Olaf Tryggvason; and declaring how many renowned deeds and what great glory accompanied this faith. Eirik took coldly to the proposal to forsake his religion, but his wife, Thjodhild, promptly yielded, and caused a church to be built not very near the houses. The building was called Thjodhild's Church; in that spot she offered her prayers, and so did those men who received Christ, and they were many. After she accepted the faith, Thjodhild would have no intercourse with Eirik, and this was a great trial to his temper.

After this there was much talk about making ready to go to the land which Leif had discovered. Thorstein, Eirik's son, was chief mover in this, a worthy man, wise and much liked. Eirik was also asked to go, and they believed that his luck and foresight would be of the highest use. He was [for a long time against it, but did not say nay], when his friends exhorted him to go. They made ready the ship which Thorbjorn had brought there, and there were twenty men who undertook to start in her. They had little property, but chiefly weapons and food. On the morning when Eirik left home he took a little box, which had in it gold and silver; he hid the money, and then went forth on his journey. He had proceeded, however, but a little way, when he fell from his horse, and broke his ribs and injured his shoulder, and cried out, "Aiai!" At this accident he sent word to his wife that she should take away the money that he had hidden, declaring his misfortune to be a penalty paid on account of having hid the money. Afterwards they sailed away out of Eiriksfiordr with gladness, as their plan seemed to promise success. They were driven about for a long time on the open sea, and came not into the track which they desired. They came in sight of Iceland, and also met with birds from the coast of Ireland. Then was their ship tossed to and fro on the sea. They returned about harvest-tide, worn out by toil and much exhausted, and reached Eiriksfiordr at the beginning of winter. Then spake Eirik, "You were in better spirits in the summer, when you went forth out of the firth, than you are in now, and yet for all that there is much to be thankful for." Thorstein replied, "It is a chieftain's duty now to look after some arrangement for these men who are without shelter, and to find them food." Eirik answered, "That is an ever-true saying. 'You know not until you have got your answer.' I will now take thy counsel about this." All those who had no other abodes were to go with the father and the son. Then came they to land, and went forth home.

5. Now, after this, I have to tell you how Thorstein, Eirik's son, began wooing Gudrid, Thorbjorn's daughter. To his proposals a favourable answer was given, both by the maid herself, and also by her father. The marriage was also arranged, so that Thorstein went to take possession of his bride, and the bridal feast was held at Brattahlid in the autumn. The banquet went off well, and was numerously attended. Thorstein owned a homestead in the Vestribygd on the estate known as Lysufjorðr (shining firth). The man who was called Thorstein owned the other half of the homestead. His wife was called Sigrid. Thorstein went, during the autumn, to Lysufjorðr, to his namesake, both he and Gudrid. Their reception was a welcome one. They were there during the winter. When little of the winter was past, the event happened there that fever broke out on their estate. The overseer of the work was named Garth. He was an unpopular man. He took the fever first and died. Afterwards, and with but little intermission, one took the fever after another and died. Then Thorstein, Eirik's son, fell ill, and also Sigrid, the wife of his namesake Thorstein. [And one evening Sigrid left the house, and rested awhile opposite the outer door; and Gudrid accompanied her; and they looked back towards the outer door, and Sigrid screamed out aloud. Gudrid said, "We have come forth unwarily, and thou canst in no wise withstand the cold; let us even go home as quickly as possible." "It is not safe as matters are," answered Sigrid. "There is all that crowd of dead people before the door; Thorstein, thy husband,

also, and myself, I recognise among them, and it is a grief thus to behold." And when this passed away, she said, "Let us now go, Gudrid; I see the crowd no longer." Thorstein, Eirik's son, had also disappeared from her sight; he had seemed to have a whip in his hand, and to wish to smite the ghostly troop. Afterwards they went in, and before morning came she was dead, and a coffin was prepared for the body. Now, the same day, the men purposed to go out fishing, and Thorstein led them to the landing places, and in the early morning he went to see what they had caught. Then Thorstein, Eirik's son, sent word to his namesake to come to him, saying that matters at home were hardly quiet; that the housewife was endeavouring to rise to her feet and to get under the clothes beside him. And when he was come in she had risen upon the edge of the bed. Then took he her by the hands and laid a pole-axe upon her breast. Thorstein, Eirik's son, died near nightfall. Thorstein, the franklin, begged Gudrid to lie down and sleep, saying that he would watch over the body during the night. So she did, and when a little of the night was past, Thorstein, Eirik's son, sat up and spake, saying he wished Gudrid to be called to him, and that he wished to speak with her. "God wills," he said, "that this hour be given to me for my own, and the further completion of my plan." Thorstein, the franklin, went to find Gudrid, and waked her; begged her to cross herself, and to ask God for help, and told her what Thorstein, Eirik's son, had spoken with him; "and he wishes," said he, "to meet with thee. Thou art obliged to consider what plan thou wilt adopt, because I can in this issue advise thee in nowise." She answered, "It may be that this, this wonderful thing, has regard to certain matters, which are afterwards to be had in memory; and I hope that God's keeping will test upon me, and I will, with God's grace, undertake the risk and go to him, and know what he will say, for I shall not be able to escape if harm must happen to me. I am far from wishing that he should go elsewhere; I suspect, moreover, that the matter will be a pressing one." Then went Gudrid and saw Thorstein. He appeared to her as if shedding tears. He spake in her ear, in a low voice, certain words which she alone might know; but this he said so that all heard, "That those men would be blessed who held the true faith, and that all salvation and mercy accompanied it; and that many, nevertheless, held it lightly." "It is," said he, "no good custom which has prevailed here in Greenland since Christianity came, to bury men in unconsecrated ground with few religious rites over them. I wish for myself, and for those other men who have died, to be taken to the church; but for Garth, I wish him to be burned on a funeral pile as soon as may be, for he is the cause of all those ghosts which have been among us this winter." He spake to Gudrid also about her own state, saying that her destiny would be a great one, and begged her to beware of marrying Greenland men. He begged her also to pay over their property to the Church and some to the poor; and then he sank down for the second time.] It had been a custom in Greenland, after Christianity was brought there, to bury men in unconsecrated ground on the farms where they died. An upright stake was placed over a body, and when the priests came afterwards to the place, then was the stake pulled out, consecrated water poured therein, and a funeral service held, though it might be long after the burial. The bodies were removed to the church in Eiriksfjorðr, and funeral services held by the priests. After that died Thorbjorn. The whole property then went to Gudrid. Eirik received her into his household, and looked well after her stores.

6. There was a man named Thorfinn Karlsefni, son of Thord Horsehead, who dwelt in the north (of Iceland), at Reynines in Skagafjorðr, as it is now called. Karlsefni was a man of good family, and very rich. His mother's name was Thorun. He engaged in trading journeys, and seemed a goodly, bold, and gallant traveller. One summer Karlsefni prepared his ship, intending to go to Greenland. Snorri, Thorbrand's son, from Alptafjorðr, resolved to travel with him, and there were thirty men in the company. There was a man named Bjarni, Grimolf's son, a man of Breiðafjorðr (Broadfirth); another called Thorhall, son of Gamli, a man from the east of Iceland. They prepared their ship the very same summer as Karlsefni, with intent also to go to Greenland. They had in the ship forty men. The two ships launched out into the

open sea as soon as they were ready. It is not recorded how long a voyage they had. But, after this, I have to tell you that both these ships came to Eiriksfjorðr about autumn. Eirik rode down to the ships with other men of the land, and a market-fair was promptly instituted. The captains invited Gudrid to take such of the merchandise as she wished, and Eirik displayed on his part much magnificence in return, inasmuch as he invited both these ships' companies home with him to pass the winter in Brattahlid. The merchants accepted the invitation, and went home with Eirik. Afterwards their merchandise was removed to Brattahlid, where a good and large outhouse was not lacking in which to store the goods. The merchants were well pleased to stay with Eirik during the winter. When now Yule was drawing nigh, Eirik began to look more gloomy than he was wont to be. Presently Karlsefni entered into conversation with him, and said, "Art thou in trouble, Eirik? it appears to me that thou art somewhat more taciturn than thou hast been; still thou helpst us with much liberality, and we are bound to reward thee according as we have means thereto. Say now what causes thy cheerlessness." Eirik answered, "You receive hospitality well, and like worthy men. Now, I have no mind that our intercourse together should be expensive to you; but so it is, that it will seem to me an ill thing if it is heard that you never spent a worse Yule than this, just now beginning, when Eirik the Red entertained you at Brattahlid, in Greenland." Karlsefni answered, "It must not come to such a pass; we have in our ships malt, meal, and corn, and you have right and title to take therefrom whatever you wish, and to make your entertainment such as consorts with your munificence." And Eirik accepted the offer. Then was preparation made for the Yule-feast, and so magnificent was it that the men thought they had scarcely ever seen so grand a feast. And after Yule, Karlsefni broached to Eirik the subject of a marriage with Gudrid, which he thought might be under Eirik's control, and the woman appeared to him to be both beautiful and of excellent understanding. Eirik answered and said, that for his part he would willingly undertake his suit, and said, moreover, that she was worthy of a good match. It is also likely, he thought, that she will be following out her destiny, should she be given to him; and, moreover, the report which comes to me of him is good. The proposals were now laid before her, and she allowed the marriage with her to be arranged which Eirik wished to promote. However, I will not now speak at length how this marriage took place; the Yule festival was prolonged and made into a marriage-feast. Great joy was there in Brattahlid during the winter. Much playing at backgammon and telling of stories went on, and many things were done that ministered to the comfort of the household.

7. During this time much talk took place in Brattahlid about making ready to go to Vinland the Good, and it was asserted that they would there find good choice lands. The discourse came to such conclusion that Karlsefni and Snorri prepared their ship, with the intention of seeking Vinland during the summer. Bjarni and Thorhall ventured on the same expedition, with their ship and the retinue which had accompanied them. [There was a man named Thorvard; he married Freydis, natural daughter of Eirik the Red; he set out with them likewise, as also Thorvald, a son of Eirik.] There was a man named Thorvald; he was a son-in-law of Eirik the Red. Thorhall was called the Sportsman; he had for a long time been Eirik's companion in hunting and fishing expeditions during the summers, and many things had been committed to his keeping. Thorhall was a big man, dark, and of gaunt appearance; rather advanced in years, overbearing in temper, of melancholy mood, silent at all times, underhand in his dealings, and withal given to abuse, and always inclined towards the worst. He had kept himself aloof from the true faith when it came to Greenland. He was but little encompassed with the love of friends, but yet Eirik had long held conversation with him. He went in the ship with Thorvald and his man, because he was widely acquainted with the unpeopled districts. They had the ship which Thorbjorn had brought to Greenland, and they ventured on the expedition with Karlsefni and the others; and most of them in this ship were Greenlanders. There were one hundred and sixty men in their ships. They sailed away from land; then to the Vestribýgd and to Bjarneyjar (the Bear Islands). Thence they sailed away from Bjarneyjar with northerly

winds. They were out at sea two half-days. Then they came to land, and rowed along it in boats, and explored it, and found there flat stones, many and so great that two men might well lie on them stretched on their backs with heel to heel. Polar-foxes were there in abundance. This land they gave name to, and called it Hellu-land (stone-land). Then they sailed with northerly winds two half-days, and there was then land before them, and on it a great forest and many wild beasts. An island lay in the south-east off the land, and they found bears thereon, and called the island Bjarney (Bear Island); but the mainland, where the forest was, they called Mark-land (forest-land). Then, when two half-days were passed, they saw land, and sailed under it. There was a cape to which they came. They cruised along the land, leaving it on the starboard side. There was a harbourless coast-land, and long sandy strands. They went to the land in boats, and found the keel of a ship, and called the place Kjarar-nes (Keelness). They gave also name to the strands, calling them Furdustrandir (wonder-shore), because it was tedious to sail by them. Then the coast became indented with creeks, and they directed their ships along the creeks. Now, before this, when Leif was with King Olaf Tryggvason, and the king had requested him to preach Christianity in Greenland, he gave him two Scotch people, the man called Haki, and the woman called Hækja. The king requested Leif to have recourse to these people if ever he should want fleetness, because they were swifter than wild beasts. Eirik and Leif had got these people to go with Karlsefni. Now, when they had sailed by Furdustrandir, they put the Scotch people on land, and requested them to run into the southern regions, seek for choice land, and come back after three half-days were passed. They were dressed in such wise that they had on the garment which they called *biafal*. It was made with a hood at the top, open at the sides, without sleeves, and was fastened between the legs. A button and a loop held it together there; and elsewhere they were without clothing. Then did they cast anchors from the ships, and lay there to wait for them. And when three days were expired the Scotch people leapt down from the land, and one of them had in his hand a bunch of grapes, and the other an ear of wild wheat.

They said to Karlsefni that they considered they had found good and choice land. Then they received them into their ship, and proceeded on their journey to where the shore was cut into by a firth. They directed the ships within the firth. There was an island lying out in front of the firth, and there were great currents around the island, which they called Straums-ey (Stream-island). There were so many birds on it that scarcely was it possible to put one's feet down for the eggs. They continued their course up the firth, which they called Straumsfjördr, and carried their cargo ashore from the ships, and there they prepared to stay. They had with them cattle of all kinds, and for themselves they sought out the produce of the land thereabout. There were mountains, and the place was fair to look upon. They gave no heed to anything except to explore the land, and they found large pastures. They remained there during the winter, which happened to be a hard one, with no work doing; and they were badly off for food, and the fishing failed. Then they went out to the island, hoping that something might be got there from fishing or from what was drifted ashore. In that spot there was little, however, to be got for food, but their cattle found good sustenance. After that they called upon God, praying that He would send them some little store of meat, but their prayer was not so soon granted as they were eager that it should be. Thorhall disappeared from sight, and they went to seek him, and sought for three half-days continuously. On the fourth half-day Karlsefni and Bjarni found him on the peak of a crag. He lay with his face to the sky, with both eyes and mouth and nostrils wide open, clawing and pinching himself, and reciting something. They asked why he had come there. He replied that it was of no importance; begged them not to wonder thereat; as for himself, he had lived so long, they needed not to take any account of him. They begged him to go home with them, and he did so. A little while after a whale was driven ashore, and the men crowded round it, and cut it up, and still they knew not what kind of whale it was. Even Karlsefni recognised it not, though he had great knowledge of whales. It was cooked by the cook-boys, and they ate thereof; though bad effects came upon all from it after-

wards. Then began Thorhall, and said, "Has it not been that the Redbeard has proved a better friend than your Christ? This was my gift for the poetry which I composed about Thor, my patron; seldom has he failed me." Now, when the men knew that, none of them would eat of it, and they threw it down from the rocks, and turned with their supplications to God's mercy. Then was granted to them opportunity of fishing, and after that there was no lack of food that spring. They went back again from the island, within Straumsfjördr, and obtained food from both sides; from hunting on the mainland, and from gathering eggs and from fishing on the side of the sea.

8. When summer was at hand they discussed about their journey, and made an arrangement. Thorhall the Sportsman wished to proceed northwards along Furdustrandir, and off Kjalarnes, and so seek Vinland; but Karlsefni desired to proceed southwards along the land and away from the east, because the land appeared to him the better the further south he went, and he thought it also more advisable to explore in both directions. Then did Thorhall make ready for his journey out by the islands, and there volunteered for the expedition with him not more than nine men; but with Karlsefni there went the remainder of the company. And one day, when Thorhall was carrying water to his ship, he drank, and recited this verse:—

"The clashers of weapons did say when I came here that I should have the best of drink (though it becomes me not to complain before the common people). Eager God of the war-helmet! I am made to raise the bucket; wine has not moistened my beard, rather do I kneel at the fountain."

Afterwards they put to sea, and Karlsefni accompanied them by the island. Before they hoisted sail Thorhall recited a verse:—

"Go we back where our countrymen are. Let us make the skilled hawk of the sand-heaven explore the broad ship-courses; while the dauntless rousers of the sword-storm, who praise the land, and cook whale, dwell on Furdustrandir."

Then they left, and sailed northwards along Furdustrandir and Kjalarnes, and attempted there to sail against a wind from the west. A gale came upon them, however, and drove them onwards against Ireland, and there were they severely treated, enthralled, and beaten. Then Thorhall lost his life.

9. Karlsefni proceeded southwards along the land, with Snorri and Bjarni and the rest of the company. They journeyed a long while, and until they arrived at a river, which came down from the land and fell into a lake, and so on to the sea. There were large islands off the mouth of the river, and they could not come into the river except at high flood-tide. Karlsefni and his people sailed to the mouth of the river, and called the land Hop. There they found fields of wild wheat wherever there were low grounds; and the vine in all places where there was rough rising ground. Every rivulet there was full of fish. They made holes where the land and water joined and where the tide went highest; and when it ebbed they found halibut in the holes. There was great plenty of wild animals of every form in the wood. They were there half a month, amusing themselves, and not becoming aware of anything. Their cattle they had with them. And early one morning, as they looked around, they beheld nine canoes made of hides, and snout-like staves were being brandished from the boats, and they made a noise like flails, and twisted round in the direction of the sun's motion. Then Karlsefni said, "What will this betoken?" Snorri answered him, "It may be that it is a token of peace; let us take a white shield and go to meet them." And so they did. Then did they in the canoes row forwards, and showed surprise at them, and came to land. They were short men, ill-looking, with their hair in disorderly fashion on their heads; they were large-eyed, and had broad cheeks. And they stayed there awhile in astonishment. Afterwards they rowed away to the south, off the headland.

10. They had built their settlements up above the lake. And some of the dwellings were well within the land, but some were near the lake. Now they remained there that winter. They had no snow whatever, and all their cattle went out to graze without keepers. Now when spring began, they beheld one morning early, that a fleet of hide-canoes was rowing from the south off the headland;

so many were they as if the sea were strewn with pieces of charcoal, and there was also the brandishing of staves as before from each boat. Then they held shields up, and a market was formed between them; and this people in their purchases preferred red cloth; in exchange they had furs to give, and skins quite grey. They wished also to buy swords and lances, but Karlsefni and Snorri forbade it. They offered for the cloth dark hides, and took in exchange a span long of cloth, and bound it round their heads; and so matters went on for a while. But when the stock of cloth began to grow small, then they split it asunder, so that it was not more than a finger's breadth. The Skroelíngar (Esquimaux) gave for it still quite as much, or more than before.

11. Now it came to pass that a bull, which belonged to Karlsefni's people, rushed out of the wood and bellowed loudly at the same time. The Skroelíngar, frightened thereat, rushed away to their canoes, and rowed south along the coast. There was then nothing seen of them for three weeks together. When that time was gone by, there was seen approaching from the south a great crowd of Skroelíngar boats, coming down upon them like a stream, the staves this time being all brandished in the direction opposite to the sun's motion, and the Skroelíngar were all howling loudly. Then took they and bare red shields to meet them. They encountered one another and fought, and there was a great shower of missiles. The Skroelíngar had also war-slings, or catapults. Then Karlsefni and Snorri see that the Skroelíngar are bringing up poles, with a very large ball attached to each, to be compared in size to a sheep's stomach, dark in colour; and these flew over Karlsefni's company towards the land, and when they came down they struck the ground with a hideous noise. This produced great terror in Karlsefni and his company, so that their only impulse was to retreat up the country along the river, because it seemed as if crowds of Skroelíngar were driving at them from all sides. And they stopped not until they came to certain crags. There they offered them stern resistance. Freydis came out and saw how they were retreating. She called out, "Why run you away from such worthless creatures, stout men that ye are, when, as seems to me likely, you might slaughter them like so many cattle? Let me but have a weapon, I think I could fight better than any of you." They gave no heed to what she said. Freydis endeavoured to accompany them, still she soon lagged behind, because she was not well; she went after them into the wood, and the Skroelíngar directed their pursuit after her. She came upon a dead man; Thorbrand, Snorri's son, with a flat stone fixed in his head; his sword lay beside him, so she took it up and prepared to defend herself therewith. Then came the Skroelíngar upon her. She let down her sark and struck her breast with the naked sword. At this they were frightened, rushed off to their boats, and fled away. Karlsefni and the rest came up to her and praised her zeal. Two of Karlsefni's men fell, and four of the Skroelíngar, notwithstanding they had overpowered them by superior numbers. After that, they proceeded to their booths, and began to reflect about the crowd of men which attacked them upon the land; it appeared to them now that the one troop will have been that which came in the boats, and the other troop will have been a delusion of sight. The Skroelíngar also found a dead man, and his axe lay beside him. One of them struck a stone with it, and broke the axe. It seemed to them good for nothing, as it did not withstand the stone, and they threw it down.

12. [Karlsefni and his company] were now of opinion that though the land might be choice and good, there would be always war and terror overhanging them, from those who dwelt there before them. They made ready, therefore, to move away, with intent to go to their own land. They sailed forth northwards, and found five Skroelíngar in jackets of skin, sleeping [near the sea], and they had with them a chest, and in it was marrow of animals mixed with blood; and they considered that these must have been outlawed. They slew them. Afterwards they came to a headland and a multitude of wild animals; and this headland appeared as if it might be a cake of cow-dung, because the animals passed the winter there. Now they came to Straumsfjördr, where also they had abundance of all kinds. It is said by some that Bjarni and Freydis remained there, and a hundred men with them, and went not further away. But Karlsefni and Snorri journeyed southwards, and forty men

with them, and after staying no longer than scarcely two months at Hop, had come back the same summer. Karlsefni set out with a single ship to seek Thorhall, but the (rest of the) company remained behind. He and his people went northwards off Kjalarnes, and were then borne onwards towards the west, and the land lay on their larboard-side, and was nothing but wilderness. And when they had proceeded for a long time, there was a river which came down from the land, flowing from the east towards the west. They directed their course within the river's mouth, and lay opposite the southern bank.

13. One morning Karlsefni's people beheld as it were a glittering speak above the open space in front of them, and they shouted at it. It stirred itself, and it was a being of the race of men that have only one foot, and he came down quickly to where they lay. Thorvald, son of Eirik the Red, sat at the tiller, and the One-footer shot him with an arrow in the lower abdomen. He drew out the arrow. Then said Thorvald, "Good land have we reached, and fat is it about the paunch." Then the One-footer leapt away again northwards. They chased after him, and saw him occasionally, but it seemed as if he would escape them. He disappeared at a certain creek. Then they turned back, and one man spake this ditty:—

"Our men chased (all true it is) a One-footer down to the shore; but the wonderful man strove hard in the race.... Harken, Karlsefni."

Then they journeyed away back again northwards, and saw, as they thought, the land of the One-footers. They wished, however, no longer to risk their company. They conjectured the mountains to be all one range; those, that is, which were at Hop, and those which they now discovered; almost answering to one another; and it was the same distance to them on both sides from Straumsfjördr. They journeyed back, and were in Straumsfjördr the third winter. Then fell the men greatly into backsliding. They who were wifeless pressed their claims at the hands of those who were married. Snorri, Karlsefni's son, was born the first autumn, and he was three winters old when they began their journey home. Now, when they sailed from Vinland, they had a southern wind, and reached Markland, and found five Skroelíngar; one was a bearded man, two were women, two children. Karlsefni's people caught the children, but the others escaped and sunk down into the earth. And they took the children with them, and taught them their speech, and they were baptized. The children called their mother Vætilldi, and their father Uvœgi. They said that kings ruled over the land of the Skroelíngar, one of whom was called Avalldamon, and the other Valldidida. They said also that there were no houses, and the people lived in caves or holes. They said, moreover, that there was a land on the other side over against their land, and the people there were dressed in white garments, uttered loud cries, bare long poles, and wore fringes. This was supposed to be Hvít-ramannaland (whiteman's land). Then came they to Greenland, and remained with Eirik the Red during the winter.

14. Bjarni, Grimolf's son, and his men were carried into the Irish Ocean, and came into a part where the sea was infested by ship-worms. They did not find it out before the ship was eaten through under them; then they debated what plan they should follow. They had a ship's boat which was smeared with tar made of seal-fat. It is said that the ship-worm will not bore into the wood which has been smeared with the seal-tar. The counsel and advice of most of the men was to ship into the boat as many men as it would hold. Now, when that was tried, the boat held not more than half the men. Then Bjarni advised that it should be decided by the casting of lots, and not by the rank of the men, which of them should go into the boat; and inasmuch as every man there wished to go into the boat, though it could not hold all of them; therefore, they accepted the plan to cast lots who should leave the ship for the boat. And the lot so fell that Bjarni, and nearly half the men with him, were chosen for the boat. So then those left the ship and went into the boat who had been chosen by lot so to do. And when the men were come into the boat, a young man, an Icelander, who had been a fellow-traveller of Bjarni, said, "Dost thou intend, Bjarni, to separate thyself here from me?" "It must needs be so now," Bjarni answered. He replied, "Because, in such case, thou didst not so promise me when I set out from Iceland with thee from the home-

stead of my father." Bjarni answered, "I do not, however, see here any other plan; but what plan dost thou suggest?" He replied, "I propose this plan, that we two make a change in our places, and thou come here and I will go there." Bjarni answered, "So shall it be; and this I see, that thou labourest willingly for life, and that it seems to thee a grievous thing to face death." Then they changed places. The man went into the boat, and Bjarni back into the ship; and it is said that Bjarni perished there in the Worm-sea, and they who were with him in the ship; but the boat and those who were in it went on their journey until they reached land, and told this story afterwards.

15. The next summer Karlsefni set out for Iceland, and Snorri with him, and went home to his house in Reynines. His mother considered that he had made a shabby match, and she was not at home the first winter. But when she found that Gudrid was a lady without peer, she went home, and their intercourse was happy. The daughter of Snorri, Karlsefni's son, was Hallfrid, mother of Bishop Thorlak, the son of Runolf. (Hallfrid and Runolf) had a son, whose name was Thorbjorn; his daughter was Thorun, mother of Bishop Bjarn. Thorgeir was the name of a son of Snorri, Karlsefni's son; he was father of Yngvild, the mother of the first Bishop Brand. And here ends this story.

Laxdæla Saga

Chap. I: Of Ketill Flatnose and his Descendants, 9th Century A.D.

Ketill Flatnose was the name of a man. He was the son of Bjorn the Ungartered. Ketill was a mighty and high-born chieftain (her-sir) in Norway. He abode in Raumsdale, within the folkland of the Raumsdale people, which lies between Southmere and Northmere. Ketill Flatnose had for wife Yngvild, daughter of Ketill Wether, who was a man of exceeding great worth. They had five children; one was named Bjorn the Eastman, and another Helgi Bjolan. Thorunn the Horned was the name of one of Ketill's daughters, who was the wife of Helgi the Lean, son of Eyvind Eastman, and Rafarta, daughter of Kjarval, the Irish king. Unn "the Deep-minded" was another of Ketill's daughters, and was the wife of Olaf the White, son of Ingjald, who was son of Frodi the Valiant, who was slain by the Svertlings. Jorunn, "Men's Wit-breaker," was the name of yet another of Ketill's daughters. She was the mother of Ketill the Finn, who settled on land at Kirkby. His son was Asbjorn, father of Thorstein, father of Surt, the father of Sighat the Speaker-at-Law.

Chap. II: Ketill and his Sons prepare to leave Norway

In the latter days of Ketill arose the power of King Harald the Fairhaired, in such a way that no folkland king or other great men could thrive in the land unless he alone ruled what title should be theirs. When Ketill heard that King Harald was minded to put to him the same choice as to other men of might—namely, not only to put up with his kinsmen being left unatoned, but to be made himself a hireling to boot—he calls together a meeting of his kinsmen, and began his speech in this wise: "You all know what dealings there have been between me and King Harald, the which there is no need of setting forth; for a greater need besets us, to wit, to take counsel as to the troubles that now are in store for us. I have true news of King Harald's enmity towards us, and to me it seems that we may abide no trust from that quarter. It seems to me that there are two choices left us, either to fly the land or to be slaughtered each in his own seat. Now, as for me, my will is rather to abide the same death that my kinsmen suffer, but I would not lead you by my wilfulness into so great a trouble, for I know the temper of my kinsmen and friends, that ye would not desert me, even though it would be some trial of manhood to follow me." Bjorn, the son of Ketill, answered: "I will make known my wishes at once. I will follow the example of noble men, and fly this land. For I deem myself no greater a man by abiding at home the thralls of King Harald, that they may chase me away from my own possessions, or that else I may have to come by utter death at their hands." At this there was made a good cheer, and they all thought it was spoken bravely. This counsel then was settled, that they should leave the country, for the sons of Ketill urged it much, and no one spoke against it. Bjorn and Helgi wished to go to Iceland, for they said they had heard many pleasing news thereof. They had been told that there was good land to be had there, and no need to pay money for it; they said there was plenty of whale and salmon and other fishing all the year round there. But Ketill said, "Into that fishing place I shall never come in my old age." So Ketill then told his mind, saying his desire was rather to go west over the sea, for there was a chance of getting a good livelihood.

He knew lands there wide about, for there he had harried far and wide.

Chap. III: Ketill's Sons go to Iceland

After that Ketill made a great feast, and at it he married his daughter Thorunn the Horned to Helgi the Lean, as has been said before. After that Ketill arrayed his journey west over the sea. Unn, his daughter, and many others of his relations went with him. That same summer Ketill's sons went to Iceland with Helgi, their brother-in-law. Bjorn, Ketill's son, brought his ship to the west coast of Iceland, to Broadfirth, and sailed up the firth along the southern shore, till he came to where a bay cuts into the land, and a high mountain stood on the ness on the inner side of the bay, but an island lay a little way off the land. Bjorn said that they should stay there for a while. Bjorn then went on land with a few men, and wandered along the coast, and but a narrow strip of land was there between fell and foreshore. This spot he thought suitable for habitation. Bjorn found the pillars of his temple washed up in a certain creek, and he thought that showed where he ought to build his house. Afterwards Bjorn took for himself all the land between Staff-river and Lavafirth, and abode in the place that ever after was called Bjornhaven. He was called Bjorn the Eastman. His wife, Gjaflaug, was the daughter of Kjallak the Old. Their sons were Ottar and Kjallak, whose son was Thorgrim, the father of Fight-Styr and Vemund, but the daughter of Kjallak was named Helga, who was the wife of Vestar of Eyr, son of Thorolf "Bladder-skull," who settled Eyr. Their son was Thorlak, father of Steinthor of Eyr. Helgi Bjolan brought his ship to the south of the land, and took all Keelness, between Kollafirth and Whalefirth, and lived at Esjuberg to old age. Helgi the Lean brought his ship to the north of the land, and took Islefirth, all along between Mastness and Rowanness, and lived at Kristness. From Helgi and Thornunn all the Islefirthers are sprung.

Chap. IV: Ketill goes to Scotland, A.D. 890

Ketill Flatnose brought his ship to Scotland, and was well received by the great men there; for he was a renowned man, and of high birth. They offered him there such station as he would like to take, and Ketill and his company of kinsfolk settled down there—all except Thorstein, his daughter's son, who forthwith betook himself to warring, and harried Scotland far and wide, and was always victorious. Later on he made peace with the Scotch, and got for his own one-half of Scotland. He had for wife Thurid, daughter of Eyvind, and sister of Helgi the Lean. The Scotch did not keep the peace long, but treacherously murdered him. Ari, Thorgil's son, the Wise, writing of his death, says that he fell in Caithness. Unn the Deep-minded was in Caithness when her son Thorstein fell. When she heard that Thorstein was dead, and her father had breathed his last, she deemed she would have no prospering in store there. So she had a ship built secretly in a wood, and when it was ready built she arrayed it, and had great wealth withal; and she took with her all her kinsfolk who were left alive; and men deem that scarce may an example be found that any one, a woman only, has ever got out of such a state of war with so much wealth and so great a following. From this it may be seen how peerless among women she was. Unn had with her many men of great worth and high birth. A man named Koll was one of the worthiest amongst her followers, chiefly owing to his descent, he

being by title a "Hersir." There was also in the journey with Unn a man named Hord, and he too was also a man of high birth and of great worth. When she was ready, Unn took her ship to the Orkneys; there she stayed a little while, and there she married off Gro, the daughter of Thorstein the Red. She was the mother of Greilad, who married Earl Thorfinn, the son of Earl Turf-Einar, son of Rognvald Mere-Earl. Their son was Hlodvir, the father of Earl Sigurd, the father of Earl Thorfinn, and from them come all the kin of the Orkney Earls. After that Unn steered her ship to the Faroe Isles, and stayed there for some time. There she married off another daughter of Thorstein, named Olof, and from her sprung the noblest race of that land, who are called the Gate-Beards.

Chap. V: Unn goes to Iceland, A.D. 895

Unn now got ready to go away from the Faroe Isles, and made it known to her shipmates that she was going to Iceland. She had with her Olaf "Feilan," the son of Thorstein, and those of his sisters who were unmarried. After that she put to sea, and, the weather being favourable, she came with her ship to the south of Iceland to Pumice-Course (Vikrarskeid). There they had their ship broken into splinters, but all the men and goods were saved. After that she went to find Helgi, her brother, followed by twenty men; and when she came there he went out to meet her, and bade her come stay with him with ten of her folk. She answered in anger, and said she had not known that he was such a churl; and she went away, being minded to find Bjorn, her brother in Broadfirth, and when he heard she was coming, he went to meet her with many followers, and greeted her warmly, and invited her and all her followers to stay with him, for he knew his sister's high-mindedness. She liked that right well, and thanked him for his lordly behaviour. She stayed there all the winter, and was entertained in the grandest manner, for there was no lack of means, and money was not spared. In the spring she went across Broadfirth, and came to a certain ness, where they ate their mid-day meal, and since that it has been called Daymealness, from whence Middlefell-strand stretches (eastward). Then she steered her ship up Hvammsfirth and came to a certain ness, and stayed there a little while. There Unn lost her comb, so it was afterwards called Combness. Then she went about all the Broadfirth-Dales, and took to her lands as wide as she wanted. After that Unn steered her ship to the head of the bay, and there her high-seat pillars were washed ashore, and then she deemed it was easy to know where she was to take up her abode. She had a house built there: it was afterwards called Hvamm, and she lived there. The same spring as Unn set up household at Hvamm, Koll married Thorgerd, daughter of Thorstein the Red. Unn gave, at her own cost, the bridal-feast, and let Thorgerd have for her dowry all Salmonriver-Dale; and Koll set up a household there on the south side of the Salmon-river. Koll was a man of the greatest mettle: their son was named Hoskuld.

Chap. VI: Unn Divides her Land

After that Unn gave to more men parts of her land-take. To Hord she gave all Hord-Dale as far as Skramuhlaups River. He lived at Hordabolstad (Hord-Lair-Stead), and was a man of the greatest mark, and blessed with noble offspring. His son was Asbjorn the Wealthy, who lived in Ornlfsdale, at Asbjornstead, and had to wife Thorbjorg, daughter of Midfirth-Skeggi. Their daughter was Ingibjorg, who married Illugi the Black, and their sons were Hermund and Gunnlaug Worm-tongue. They are called the Gilsbecking-race. Unn spoke to her men and said: "Now you shall be rewarded for all your work, for now I do not lack means with which to pay each one of you for your toil and good-will. You all know that I have given the man named Erp, son of Earl Meldun, his freedom, for far away was it from my wish that so high-born a man should bear the name of thrall." Afterwards Unn gave him the lands of Sheepfell, between Tongue River and Mid River. His children were Orm and Asgeir, Gunbjorn, and Halldis, whom Alf o' Dales had for wife. To Sokkolf Unn gave Sokkolfsdale, where he abode to old age. Hundi was the name of one of her freedmen. He was of Scottish kin. To him she gave Hundidale. Osk was the name of the fourth daughter of Thorstein the Red. She was the mother of Thorstein Swart, the Wise, who found the "Summer

eeke." Thorhild was the name of a fifth daughter of Thorstein. She was the mother of Alf o' Dales, and many great men trace back their line of descent to him. His daughter was Thorgerd, wife of Ari Marson of Reekness, the son of Atli, the son of Ulf the Squinter and Bjorg, Eyvond's daughter, the sister of Helgi the Lean. From them come all the Reeknessings. Vigdis was the name of the sixth daughter of Thorstein the Red. From her come the men of Headland of Islefirth.

Chap. VII: Of the Wedding of Olaf "Feilan," A.D. 920

Olaf "Feilan" was the youngest of Thorstein's children. He was a tall man and strong, goodly to look at, and a man of the greatest mettle. Unn loved him above all men, and made it known to people that she was minded to settle on Olaf all her belongings at Hvamm after her day. Unn now became very weary with old age, and she called Olaf "Feilan" to her and said: "It is on my mind, kinsman, that you should settle down and marry." Olaf took this well, and said he would lean on her foresight in that matter. Unn said: "It is chiefly in my mind that your wedding-feast should be held at the end of the summer, for that is the easiest time to get in all the means needed, for to me it seems a near guess that our friends will come hither in great numbers, and I have made up my mind that this shall be the last bridal feast arrayed by me." Olaf answered: "That is well spoken; but such a woman alone I mean to take to wife who shall rob thee neither of wealth nor rule (over thine own)." That same summer Olaf "Feilan" married Alfdís. Their wedding was at Hvamm. Unn spent much money on this feast, for she let be bidden thereto men of high degree wide about from other parts. She invited Bjorn and Helgi "Bjolan," her brothers, and they came with many followers. There came Koll o' Dales, her kinsman-in-law, and Hord of Hord-Dale, and many other great men. The wedding feast was very crowded; yet there did not come nearly so many as Unn had asked, because the Isle-firth people had such a long way to come. Old age fell now fast upon Unn, so that she did not get up till mid-day, and went early to bed. No one did she allow to come to her for advice between the time she went to sleep at night and the time she was aroused, and she was very angry if any one asked how it fared with her strength. On this day Unn slept somewhat late; yet she was on foot when the guests came, and went to meet them and greeted her kinsfolk and friends with great courtesy, and said they had shown their affection to her in "coming hither from so far, and I specially name for this Bjorn and Helgi, but I wish to thank you all who are here assembled." After that Unn went into the hall and a great company with her, and when all seats were taken in the hall, every one was much struck by the lordliness of the feast. Then Unn said: "Bjorn and Helgi, my brothers, and all my other kindred and friends, I call witnesses to this, that this dwelling with all its belongings that you now see before you, I give into the hands of my kinsman, Olaf, to own and to manage." After that Unn stood up and said she would go to the bower where she was wont to sleep, but bade every one have for pastime whatever was most to his mind, and that ale should be the cheer of the common folk. So the tale goes, that Unn was a woman both tall and portly. She walked at a quick step out along the hall, and people could not help saying to each other how stately the lady was yet. They feasted that evening till they thought it time to go to bed. But the day after Olaf went to the sleeping bower of Unn, his grandmother, and when he came into the chamber there was Unn sitting up against her pillow, and she was dead. Olaf went into the hall after that and told these tidings. Every one thought it a wonderful thing, how Unn had upheld her dignity to the day of her death. So they now drank together Olaf's wedding and Unn's funeral honours, and the last day of the feast Unn was carried to the howe (burial mound) that was made for her. She was laid in a ship in the cairn, and much treasure with her, and after that the cairn was closed up. Then Olaf "Feilan" took over the household of Hvamm and all charge of the wealth there, by the advice of his kinsmen who were there. When the feast came to an end Olaf gave lordly gifts to the men most held in honour before they went away. Olaf became a mighty man and a great chieftain. He lived at Hvamm to old age.

The children of Olaf and Alfdís were Thord Yeller, who married Hrodny, daughter of Midfirth Skeggi; and their sons were, Eyjolf the Grey, Thorarin Fylsenni, and Thorkell Kuggi. One daughter of Olaf Feilan was Thora, whom Thorstein Cod-biter, son of Thorolf Most-Beard, had for wife; their sons were Bork the Stout, and Thorgrim, father of Snori the Priest. Helga was another daughter of Olaf; she was the wife of Gunnar Hlifarson; their daughter was Jofrid, whom Thorodd, son of Tongue-Odd, had for wife, and afterwards Thorstein, Egil's son. Thorunn was the name of yet one of his daughters. She was the wife of Herstein, son of Thorkell Blund-Ketill's son. Thordís was the name of a third daughter of Olaf: she was the wife of Thorarin, the Speaker-at-Law, brother of Ragi. At that time, when Olaf was living at Hvamm, Koll o' Dales, his brother-in-law, fell ill and died. Hoskuld, the son of Koll, was young at the time of his father's death: he was fulfilled of wits before the tale of his years. Hoskuld was a hopeful man, and well made of body. He took over his father's goods and household. The homestead where Koll lived was named after him, being afterwards called Hoskuldstead. Hoskuld was soon in his householding blessed with friends, for that many supports stood thereunder, both kinsmen and friends whom Koll had gathered round him. Thorgerd, Thorstein's daughter, the mother of Hoskuld, was still a young woman and most goodly; she did not care for Iceland after the death of Koll. She told Hoskuld her son that she wished to go abroad, and take with her that share of goods which fell to her lot. Hoskuld said he took it much to heart that they should part, but he would not go against her in this any more than in anything else. After that Hoskuld bought the half-part in a ship that was standing beached off Daymealness, on behalf of his mother. Thorgerd betook herself on board there, taking with her a great deal of goods. After that Thorgerd put to sea and had a very good voyage, and arrived in Norway. Thorgerd had much kindred and many noble kinsmen there. They greeted her warmly, and gave her the choice of whatever she liked to take at their hands. Thorgerd was pleased at this, and said it was her wish to settle down in that land. She had not been a widow long before a man came forward to woo her. His name was Herjolf; he was a "landed man" as to title, rich, and of much account. Herjolf was a tall and strong man, but he was not fair of feature; yet the most high-mettled of men, and was of all men the best skilled at arms. Now as they sat taking counsel on this matter, it was Thorgerd's place to reply to it herself, as she was a widow; and, with the advice of her relations, she said she would not refuse the offer. So Thorgerd married Herjolf, and went with him to his home, and they loved each other dearly. Thorgerd soon showed by her ways that she was a woman of the greatest mettle, and Herjolf's manner of life was deemed much better and more highly to be honoured now that he had got such an one as she was for his wife.

Chap. VIII: The Birth of Hrut and Thorgerd's Second Widowhood, A.D. 923

Herjolf and Thorgerd had not long been together before they had a son. The boy was sprinkled with water, and was given the name of Hrut. He was at an early age both big and strong as he grew up; and as to growth of body, he was goodlier than any man, tall and broad-shouldered, slender of waist, with fine limbs and well-made hands and feet. Hrut was of all men the fairest of feature, and like what Thorstein, his mother's father, had been, or like Ketill Flatnose. And all things taken together, he was a man of the greatest mettle. Herjolf now fell ill and died, and men deemed that a great loss. After that Thorgerd wished to go to Iceland to visit Hoskuld her son, for she still loved him best of all men, and Hrut was left behind well placed with his relations. Thorgerd arrayed her journey to Iceland, and went to find Hoskuld in his home in Salmonriver-Dale. He received his mother with honour. She was possessed of great wealth, and remained with Hoskuld the day of her death. A few winters after Thorgerd came to Iceland she fell sick and died. Hoskuld took to himself all her money, but Hrut his brother owned one-half thereof.

Chap. IX: Hoskuld's Marriage, A.D. 935

At this time Norway was ruled by Hakon, Athelstan's fosterling. Hoskuld was one of his bodyguard, and stayed each year, turn and turn about, at Hakon's court, or at his own home, and was a very renowned man both in Norway and in Iceland. Bjorn was the name of a man who lived at Bjornfirth, where he had taken land, the firth being named after him. This firth cuts into the land north from Steingrim's firth, and a neck of land runs out between them. Bjorn was a man of high birth, with a great deal of money: Ljufa was the name of his wife. Their daughter was Jorunn: she was a most beautiful woman, and very proud and extremely clever, and so was thought the best match in all the firths of the West. Of this woman Hoskuld had heard, and he had heard besides that Bjorn was the wealthiest yeoman throughout all the Strands. Hoskuld rode from home with ten men, and went to Bjorn's house at Bjornfirth. He was well received, for to Bjorn his ways were well known. Then Hoskuld made his proposal, and Bjorn said he was pleased, for his daughter could not be better married, yet turned the matter over to her decision. And when the proposal was set before Jorunn, she answered in this way: "From all the reports I have heard of you, Hoskuld, I cannot but answer your proposal well, for I think that the woman would be well cared for who should marry you; yet my father must have most to say in this matter, and I will agree in this with his wishes." And the long and short of it was, that Jorunn was promised to Hoskuld with much money, and the wedding was to be at Hoskuldstead. Hoskuld now went away with matters thus settled, and home to his abode, and stays now at home until this wedding feast was to be held. Bjorn came from the north for the wedding with a brave company of followers. Hoskuld had also asked many guests, both friends and relations, and the feast was of the grandest. Now, when the feast was over each one returned to his home in good friendship and with seemly gifts. Jorunn Bjorn's daughter sits behind at Hoskuldstead, and takes over the care of the household with Hoskuld. It was very soon seen that she was wise and well up in things, and of manifold knowledge, though rather high-tempered at most times. Hoskuld and she loved each other well, though in their daily ways they made no show thereof. Hoskuld became a great chieftain; he was mighty and pushing, and had no lack of money, and was thought to be nowise less of his ways than his father, Koll. Hoskuld and Jorunn had not been married long before they came to have children. A son of theirs was named Thorliek. He was the eldest of their children. Bard was another son of theirs. One of their daughters was called Hallgerd, afterwards surnamed "Long-Breeks." Another daughter was called Thurid. All their children were most hopeful. Thorliek was a very tall man, strong and handsome, though silent and rough; and men thought that such was the turn of his temper, as that he would be no man of fair dealings, and Hoskuld often would say, that he would take very much after the race of the men of the Strands. Bard, Hoskuld's son, was most manly to look at, and of goodly strength, and from his appearance it was easy to see that he would take more after his father's people. Bard was of quiet ways while he was growing up, and a man lucky in friends, and Hoskuld loved him best of all his children. The house of Hoskuld now stood in great honour and renown. About this time Hoskuld gave his sister Groa in marriage to Velief the Old, and their son was "Holmgang"-Bersi.

Chap. X: Of Viga Hrapp

Hrapp was the name of a man who lived in Salmon-river-Dale, on the north bank of the river on the opposite side to Hoskuldstead, at the place that was called later on Hrapppstead, where there is now waste land. Hrapp was the son of Sumarlid, and was called Fight-Hrapp. He was Scotch on his father's side, and his mother's kin came from Sodor, where he was brought up. He was a very big, strong man, and one not willing to give in even in face of some odds; and for the reason that was most overbearing, and would never make good what he had misdone, he had had to fly from West-over-the-sea, and had bought the land on which he afterwards lived. His wife was named Vigdis, and was Hallstein's daughter; and their son was named Sumarlid. Her brother was

named Thorstein Surt; he lived at Thorsness, as has been written before. Sumarlid was brought up there, and was a most promising young man. Thorstein had been married, but by this time his wife was dead. He had two daughters, one named Gudrid, and the other Osk. Thorkell trefill married Gudrid, and they lived in Svi-gnaskard. He was a great chieftain, and a sage of wits; he was the son of Raudabjorn. Osk, Thorstein's daughter, was given in marriage to a man of Broadfirth named Thorarin. He was a valiant man, and very popular, and lived with Thorstein, his father-in-law, who was sunk in age and much in need of their care. Hrapp was disliked by most people, being overbearing to his neighbours; and at times he would hint to them that theirs would be a heavy lot as neighbours, if they held any other man for better than himself. All the goodmen took one counsel, and went to Hoskuld and told him their trouble. Hoskuld bade them tell him if Hrapp did any one any harm, "For he shall not plunder me of men or money."

Chap. XI: About Thord Goddi and Thorbjorn Skrjup

Thord Goddi was the name of a man who lived in Salmon-river-Dale on the northern side of the river, and his house was Vigdis called Goddistead. He was a very wealthy man; he had no children, and had bought the land he lived on. He was a neighbour of Hrapp's, and was very often badly treated by him. Hoskuld looked after him, so that he kept his dwelling in peace. Vigdis was the name of his wife. She was daughter of Ingjald, son of Olaf Feilan, and brother's daughter of Thord Yeller, and sister's daughter of Thorolf Rednose of Sheepfell. This Thorolf was a great hero, and in a very good position, and his kinsmen often went to him for protection. Vigdis had married more for money than high station. Thord had a thrall who had come to Iceland with him, named Asgaut. He was a big man, and shapely of body; and though he was called a thrall, yet few could be found his equal amongst those called freemen, and he knew well how to serve his master. Thord had many other thralls, though this one is the only one mentioned here. Thorbjorn was the name of a man. He lived in Salmon-river-Dale, next to Thord, up valley away from his homestead, and was called Skrjup. He was very rich in chattels, mostly in gold and silver.

He was an huge man and of great strength. No squanderer of money on common folk was he. Hoskuld, Dalakoll's son, deemed it a drawback to his state that his house was worse built than he wished it should be; so he bought a ship from a Shetland man. The ship lay up in the mouth of the river Blanda. That ship he gets ready, and makes it known that he is going abroad, leaving Jorunn to take care of house and children. They now put out to sea, and all went well with them; and they have somewhat southwardly into Norway, making Hordaland, where the market-town called Biorgvin was afterwards built. Hoskuld put up his ship, and had there great strength of kinsmen, though here they be not named. Hakon, the king, had then his seat in the Wick. Hoskuld did not go to the king, as his kinsfolk welcomed him with open arms. That winter all was quiet (in Norway).

Chap. XII: Hoskuld Buys a Slave Woman

There were tidings at the beginning of the summer that the king went with his fleet eastward to a tryst in Brenn-isles, to settle peace for his land, even as the law laid down should be done every third summer. This meeting was held between rulers with a view to settling such matters as kings had to adjudge—matters of international policy between Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. It was deemed a pleasure trip to go to this meeting, for thither came men from well-nigh all such lands as we know of. Hoskuld ran out his ship, being desirous also to go to the meeting; moreover, he had not been to see the king all the winter through. There was also a fair to be made for. At the meeting there were great crowds of people, and much amusement to be got—drinking, and games, and all sorts of entertainment. Nought, however, of great interest happened there. Hoskuld met many of his kinsfolk there who were come from Denmark. Now, one day as Hoskuld went out to disport himself with some other men, he saw a stately tent far away from the other booths. Hoskuld went thither, and into

the tent, and there sat a man before him in costly raiment, and a Russian hat on his head. Hoskuld asked him his name. He said he was called Gilli: "But many call to mind the man if they hear my nickname—I am called Gilli the Russian." Hoskuld said he had often heard talk of him, and that he held him to be the richest of men that had ever belonged to the guild of merchants. Still Hoskuld spoke: "You must have things to sell such as we should wish to buy." Gilli asked what he and his companions wished to buy. Hoskuld said he should like to buy some bonds-woman, "if you have one to sell." Gilli answers: "There, you mean to give me trouble by this, in asking for things you don't expect me to have in stock; but it is not sure that follows." Hoskuld then saw that right across the booth there was drawn a curtain; and Gilli then lifted the curtain, and Hoskuld saw that there were twelve women seated behind the curtain. So Gilli said that Hoskuld should come on and have a look, if he would care to buy any of these women. Hoskuld did so. They sat all together across the booth. Hoskuld looks carefully at these women. He saw a woman sitting out by the skirt of the tent, and she was very ill-clad. Hoskuld thought, as far as he could see, this woman was fair to look upon. Then said Hoskuld, "What is the price of that woman if I should wish to buy her?" Gilli replied, "Three silver pieces is what you must weigh me out for her." "It seems to me," said Hoskuld, "that you charge very highly for this bonds-woman, for that is the price of three (such)." Then Gilli said, "You speak truly, that I value her worth more than the others. Choose any of the other eleven, and pay one mark of silver for her, this one being left in my possession." Hoskuld said, "I must first see how much silver there is in the purse I have on my belt," and he asked Gilli to take the scales while he searched the purse. Gilli then said, "On my side there shall be no guile in this matter; for, as to the ways of this woman, there is a great drawback which I wish, Hoskuld, that you know before we strike this bargain." Hoskuld asked what it was. Gilli replied, "The woman is dumb. I have tried in many ways to get her to talk, but have never got a word out of her, and I feel quite sure that this woman knows not how to speak." Then, said Hoskuld, "Bring out the scales, and let us see how much the purse I have got here may weigh." Gilli did so, and now they weigh the silver, and there were just three marks weighed. Then said Hoskuld, "Now the matter stands so that we can close our bargain. You take the money for yourself, and I will take the woman. I take it that you have behaved honestly in this affair, for, to be sure, you had no mind to deceive me herein." Hoskuld then went home to his booth. That same night Hoskuld went into bed with her. The next morning when men got dressed, spake Hoskuld, "The clothes Gilli the Rich gave you do not appear to be very grand, though it is true that to him it is more of a task to dress twelve women than it is to me to dress only one." After that Hoskuld opened a chest, and took out some fine women's clothes and gave them to her; and it was the saying of every one that she looked very well when she was dressed. But when the rulers had there talked matters over according as the law provided, this meeting was broken up. Then Hoskuld went to see King Hakon, and greeted him worthily, according to custom. The king cast a side glance at him, and said, "We should have taken well your greeting, Hoskuld, even if you had saluted us sooner; but so shall it be even now."

Chap. XIII: Hoskuld Returns to Iceland, A.D. 948

After that the king received Hoskuld most graciously, and bade him come on board his own ship, and "be with us so long as you care to remain in Norway." Hoskuld answered: "Thank you for your offer; but now, this summer, I have much to be busy about, and that is mostly the reason I was so long before I came to see you, for I wanted to get for myself house-timber." The king bade him bring his ship in to the Wick, and Hoskuld tarried with the king for a while. The king got house-timber for him, and had his ship laden for him. Then the king said to Hoskuld, "You shall not be delayed here longer than you like, though we shall find it difficult to find a man to take your place." After that the king saw Hoskuld off to his ship, and said: "I have found you an honourable man, and now my mind misgives me that you are sailing for the

last time from Norway, whilst I am lord over that land." The king drew a gold ring off his arm that weighed a mark, and gave it to Hoskuld; and he gave him for another gift a sword on which there was half a mark of gold. Hoskuld thanked the king for his gifts, and for all the honour he had done him. After that Hoskuld went on board his ship, and put to sea. They had a fair wind, and hove in to the south of Iceland; and after that sailed west by Reekness, and so by Snowfellness in to Broadfirth. Hoskuld landed at Salmon-river-Mouth. He had the cargo taken out of his ship, which he took into the river and beached, having a shed built for it. A ruin is to be seen now where he built the shed. There he set up his booths, and that place is called Booths'-Dale. After that Hoskuld had the timber taken home, which was very easy, as it was not far off. Hoskuld rode home after that with a few men, and was warmly greeted, as was to be looked for. He found that all his belongings had been kept well since he left. Jorunn asked, "What woman that was who journeyed with him?" Hoskuld answered, "You will think I am giving you a mocking answer when I tell you that I do not know her name." Jorunn said, "One of two things there must be: either the talk is a lie that has come to my ears, or you must have spoken to her so much as to have asked her her name." Hoskuld said he could not gainsay that, and so told her the truth, and bade that the woman should be kindly treated, and said it was his wish she should stay in service with them. Jorunn said, "I am not going to wrangle with the mistress you have brought out of Norway, should she find living near me no pleasure; least of all should I think of it if she is both deaf and dumb." Hoskuld slept with his wife every night after he came home, and had very little to say to the mistress. Every one clearly saw that there was something betokening high birth in the way she bore herself, and that she was no fool. Towards the end of the winter Hoskuld's mistress gave birth to a male child. Hoskuld was called, and was shown the child, and he thought, as others did, that he had never seen a goodlier or a more noble-looking child. Hoskuld was asked what the boy should be called. He said it should be named Olaf, for Olaf Feilan had died a little time before, who was his mother's brother. Olaf was far before other children, and Hoskuld bestowed great love on the boy. The next summer Jorunn said, "That the woman must do some work or other, or else go away." Hoskuld said she should wait on him and his wife, and take care of her boy besides. When the boy was two years old he had got full speech, and ran about like children of four years old. Early one morning, as Hoskuld had gone out to look about his manor, the weather being fine, and the sun, as yet little risen in the sky, shining brightly, it happened that he heard some voices of people talking; so he went down to where a little brook ran past the home-field slope, and he saw two people there whom he recognised as his son Olaf and his mother, and he discovered she was not speechless, for she was talking a great deal to the boy. Then Hoskuld went to her and asked her her name, and said it was useless for her to hide it any longer. She said so it should be, and they sat down on the brink of the field. Then she said, "If you want to know my name, I am called Melkorka." Hoskuld bade her tell him more of her kindred. She answered, "Myr Kjartan is the name of my father, and he is a king in Ireland; and I was taken a prisoner of war from there when I was fifteen winters old." Hoskuld said she had kept silence far too long about so noble a descent. After that Hoskuld went on, and told Jorunn what he had just found out during his walk. Jorunn said that she "could not tell if this were true," and said she had no fondness for any manner of wizards; and so the matter dropped. Jorunn was no kinder to her than before, but Hoskuld had somewhat more to say to her. A little while after this, when Jorunn was going to bed, Melkorka was undressing her, and put her shoes on the floor, when Jorunn took the stockings and smote her with them about the head. Melkorka got angry, and struck Jorunn on the nose with her fist, so that the blood flowed. Hoskuld came in and parted them. After that he let Melkorka go away, and got a dwelling ready for her up in Salmon-river-Dale, at the place that was afterwards called Melkorkastad, which is now waste land on the south of the Salmon river. Melkorka now set up household there, and Hoskuld had everything brought there that she needed; and Olaf, their son, went with her. It was soon seen that Olaf, as he grew up, was far superior to other men, both on account of his

beauty and courtesy.

Chap. XIV: The Murder of Hall, Ingjald's Brother

Ingjald was the name of a man. He lived in Sheepisles, that lie out in Broadfirth. He was called Sheepisles' Priest. He was rich, and a mighty man of his hand. Hall was the name of his brother. He was big, and had the makings of a man in him; he was, however, a man of small means, and looked upon by most people as an unprofitable sort of man. The brothers did not usually agree very well together. Ingjald thought Hall did not shape himself after the fashion of doughty men, and Hall thought Ingjald was but little minded to lend furtherance to his affairs. There is a fishing place in Broadfirth called Bjorn isles. These islands lie many together, and were profitable in many ways. At that time men went there a great deal for the fishing, and at all seasons there were a great many men there. Wise men set great store by people in outlying fishing-stations living peacefully together, and said that it would be unlucky for the fishing if there was any quarrelling; and most men gave good heed to this. It is told how one summer Hall, the brother of Ingjald, the Sheepisles' Priest, came to Bjorn isles for fishing. He took ship as one of the crew with a man called Thorolf. He was a Broadfirth man, and was well-nigh a penniless vagrant, and yet a brisk sort of a man. Hall was there for some time, and palmed himself off as being much above other men. It happened one evening when they were come to land, Hall and Thorolf, and began to divide the catch, that Hall wished both to choose and to divide, for he thought himself the greater man of the two. Thorolf would not give in, and there were some high words, and sharp things were said on both sides, as each stuck to his own way of thinking. So Hall seized up a chopper that lay by him, and was about to heave it at Thorolf's head, but men leapt between them and stopped Hall; but he was of the maddest, and yet unable to have his way as at this time. The catch of fish remained undivided. Thorolf betook himself away that evening, and Hall took possession of the catch that belonged to them both, for then the odds of might carried the day. Hall now got another man in Thorolf's place in the boat, and went on fishing as before. Thorolf was ill-contented with his lot, for he felt he had come to shame in their dealings together; yet he remained in the islands with the determination to set straight the humble plight to which he had been made to bow against his will. Hall, in the meantime, did not fear any danger, and thought that no one would dare to try to get even with him in his own country. So one fair-weather day it happened that Hall rowed out, and there were three of them together in the boat. The fish bit well through the day, and as they rowed home in the evening they were very merry. Thorolf kept spying about Hall's doings during the day, and is standing in the landing-place when Hall came to land. Hall rowed in the forehold of the boat, and leapt overboard, intending to steady the boat; and as he jumped to land Thorolf happens to be standing near, and forthwith hews at him, and the blow caught him on his neck against the shoulder, and off flew his head. Thorolf fled away after that, and Hall's followers were all in a flurried bustle about him. The story of Hall's murder was told all over the islands, and every one thought it was indeed great news; for the man was of high birth, although he had had little good luck. Thorolf now fled from the islands, for he knew no man there who would shelter him after such a deed, and he had no kinsmen he could expect help from; while in the neighbourhood were men from whom it might be surely looked for that they would beset his life, being moreover men of much power, such as was Ingjald, the Sheepisles' Priest, the brother of Hall. Thorolf got himself ferried across to the mainland. He went with great secrecy. Nothing is told of his journey, until one evening he came to Goddinstead. Vigdis, the wife of Thord Goddi, was some sort of relation to Thorolf, and on that account he turned towards that house. Thorolf had also heard before how matters stood there, and how Vigdis was

endowed with a good deal more courage than Thord, her husband. And forthwith the same evening that Thorolf came to Goddinstead he went to Vigdis to tell her his trouble, and to beg her help. Vigdis answered his pleading in this way: "I do not deny our

relationship, and in this way alone I can look upon the deed you have done, that I deem you in no way the worse man for it. Yet this I see, that those who shelter you will thereby have at stake their lives and means, seeing what great men they are who will be taking up the blood-suit. And Thord," she said, "my husband, is not much of a warrior; but the counsels of us women are mostly guided by little foresight if anything is wanted. Yet I am loath to keep aloof from you altogether, seeing that, though I am but a woman, you have set your heart on finding some shelter here." After that Vigdis led him to an outhouse, and told him to wait for her there, and put a lock on the door. Then she went to Thord, and said, "A man has come here as a guest, named Thorolf. He is some sort of relation of mine, and I think he will need to dwell here some long time if you will allow it." Thord said he could not away with men coming to put up at his house, but bade him rest there over the next day if he had no trouble on hand, but otherwise he should be off at his swiftest. Vigdis answered, "I have offered him already to stay on, and I cannot take back my word, though he be not in even friendship with all men." After that she told Thord of the slaying of Hall, and that Thorolf who was come there was the man who had killed him. Thord was very cross-grained at this, and said he well knew how that Ingjald would take a great deal of money from him for the sheltering that had been given him already, seeing that doors here have been locked after this man. Vigdis answered, "Ingjald shall take none of your money for giving one night's shelter to Thorolf, and he shall remain here all this winter through." Thord said, "In this manner you can checkmate me most thoroughly, but it is against my wish that a man of such evil luck should stay here." Still Thorolf stayed there all the winter. Ingjald, who had to take up the blood-suit for his brother, heard this, and so arrayed him for a journey into the Dales at the end of the winter, and ran out a ferry of his whereon they went twelve together. They sailed from the west with a sharp north-west wind, and landed in Salmon-river-Mouth in the evening. They put up their ferry-boat, and came to Goddinstead in the evening, arriving there not unawares, and were cheerfully welcomed. Ingjald took Thord aside for a talk with him, and told him his errand, and said he had heard of Thorolf, the slayer of his brother, being there. Thord said there was no truth in that. Ingjald bade him not to deny it. "Let us rather come to a bargain together: you give up the man, and put me to no toil in the matter of getting at him. I have three marks of silver that you shall have, and I will overlook the offences you have brought on your hands for the shelter given to Thorolf." Thord thought the money fair, and had now a promise of acquittal of the offences for which he had hitherto most dreaded and for which he would have to abide sore loss of money. So he said, "I shall no doubt hear people speak ill of me for this, none the less this will have to be our bargain." They slept until it wore towards the latter end of the night, when it lacked an hour of day.

Chap. XV: Thorolf's Escape with Asgaut the Thrall

Ingjald and his men got up and dressed. Vigdis asked Thord what his talk with Ingjald had been about the evening before. Thord said they had talked about many things, amongst others how the place was to be ransacked, and how they should be clear of the case if Thorolf was not found there. "So I let Asgaut, my thrall, take the man away." Vigdis said she had no fondness for lies, and said she should be very loath to have Ingjald sniffing about her house, but bade him, however, do as he liked. After that Ingjald ransacked the place, and did not hit upon the man there. At that moment Asgaut came back, and Vigdis asked him where he had parted with Thorolf. Asgaut replied, "I took him to our sheep-houses as Thord told me to." Vigdis replied, "Can anything be more exactly in Ingjald's way as he returns to his ship? nor shall any risk be run, lest they should have made this plan up between them last night. I wish you to go at once, and take him away as soon as possible. You shall take him to Sheepfell to Thorolf; and if you do as I tell you, you shall get something for it. I will give you your freedom and money, that you may go where you will." Asgaut agreed to this, and went to the sheephouse to find Thorolf, and bade him get ready to go at once. At this time Ingjald rode out

of Goddinstead, for he was now anxious to get his money's worth. As he was come down from the farmstead (into the plain) he saw two men coming to meet him; they were Thorolf and Asgaut. This was early in the morning, and there was yet but little daylight. Asgaut and Thorolf now found themselves in a hole, for Ingjald was on one side of them and the Salmon River on the other. The river was terribly swollen, and there were great masses of ice on either bank, while in the middle it had burst open, and it was an ill-looking river to try to ford. Thorolf said to Asgaut, "It seems to me we have two choices before us. One is to remain here and fight as well as valour and manhood will serve us, and yet the thing most likely is that Ingjald and his men will take our lives without delay; and the other is to tackle the river, and yet that, I think, is still a somewhat dangerous one." Asgaut said that Thorolf should have his way, and he would not desert him, "whatever plan you are minded to follow in this matter." Thorolf said, "We will make for the river, then," and so they did, and arrayed themselves as light as possible. After this they got over the main ice, and plunged into the water. And because the men were brave, and Fate had ordained them longer lives, they got across the river and upon the ice on the other side. Directly after they had got across, Ingjald with his followers came to the spot opposite to them on the other side of the river. Ingjald spoke out, and said to his companions, "What plan shall we follow now? Shall we tackle the river or not?" They said he should choose, and they would rely on his foresight, though they thought the river looked impassable. Ingjald said that so it was, and "we will turn away from the river;" and when Thorolf and Asgaut saw that Ingjald had made up his mind not to cross the river, they first wring their clothes and then make ready to go on. They went on all that day, and came in the evening to Sheepfell. They were well received there, for it was an open house for all guests; and forthwith that same evening Asgaut went to see Thorolf Rednose, and told him all the matters concerning their errand, "how Vigdis, his kinswoman, had sent him this man to keep in safety." Asgaut also told him all that had happened between Ingjald and Thord Goddi; therewithal he took forth the tokens Vigdis had sent. Thorolf replied thus, "I cannot doubt these tokens. I shall indeed take this man in at her request. I think, too, that Vigdis has dealt most bravely with this matter and it is a great pity that such a woman should have so feeble a husband. And you, Asgaut, shall dwell here as long as you like." Asgaut said he would tarry there for no length of time. Thorolf now takes unto him his namesake, and made him one of his followers; and Asgaut and they parted good friends, and he went on his homeward journey. And now to tell of Ingjald. He turned back to Goddinstead when he and Thorolf parted. By that time men had come there from the nearest farmsteads at the summons of Vigdis, and no fewer than twenty men had gathered there already. But when Ingjald and his men came to the place, he called Thord to him, "You have dealt in a most cowardly way with me, Thord," says he, "for I take it to be the truth that you have got the man off." Thord said this had not happened with his knowledge; and now all the plotting that had been between Ingjald and Thord came out. Ingjald now claimed to have back his money that he had given to Thord. Vigdis was standing near during this talk, and said it had fared with them as was meet, and prayed Thord by no means to hold back this money, "For you, Thord," she said, "have got this money in a most cowardly way." Thord said she must needs have her will herein. After that Vigdis went inside, and to a chest that belonged to Thord, and found at the bottom a large purse. She took out the purse, and went outside with it up to where Ingjald was, and bade him take the money. Ingjald's brow cleared at that, and he stretched out his hand to take the purse. Vigdis raised the purse, and struck him on the nose with it, so that forthwith blood fell on the earth. Therewith she overwhelmed him with mocking words, ending by telling him that henceforth he should never have the money, and bidding him go his way. Ingjald saw that his best choice was to be off, and the sooner the better, which indeed he did, nor stopped in his journey until he got home, and was mightily ill at ease over his travel.

Chap. XVI: Thord becomes Olaf's Foster Father, A.D. 950

About this time Asgaut came home. Vigdis greeted him, and asked him what sort of reception they had had at Sheepfell. He gave a good account of it, and told her the words wherewith Thorolf had spoken out his mind. She was very pleased at that. "And you, Asgaut," she said, "have done your part well and faithfully, and you shall now know speedily what wages you have worked for. I give you your freedom, so that from this day forth you shall bear the title of a freeman. Therewith you shall take the money that Thord took as the price for the head of Thorolf, my kinsman, and now that money will be better bestowed." Asgaut thanked her for her gift with fair words. The next summer Asgaut took a berth in Day-Meal-Ness, and the ship put to sea, and they came in for heavy gales, but not a long sea-voyage, and made Norway. After that Asgaut went to Denmark and settled there, and was thought a valiant and true man. And herewith comes to an end the tale of him. But after the plot Thord Goddi had made up with Ingjald, the Sheepisles priest, when they made up their minds to compass the death of Thorolf, Vigdis' kinsman, she returned that deed with hatred, and divorced herself from Thord Goddi, and went to her kinsfolk and told them the tale. Thord Yeller was not pleased at this; yet matters went off quietly. Vigdis did not take away with her from Goddistead any more goods than her own heirlooms. The men of Hvamm let it out that they meant to have for themselves one-half of the wealth that Thord was possessed of. And on hearing this he becomes exceeding faint-hearted, and rides forthwith to see Hoskuld to tell him of his troubles. Hoskuld said, "Times have been that you have been terror-struck, through not having with such overwhelming odds to deal." Then Thord offered Hoskuld money for his help, and said he would not look at the matter with a niggard's eye. Hoskuld said, "This is clear, that you will not by peaceful consent allow any man to have the enjoyment of your wealth." Answers Thord, "No, not quite that though; for I fain would that you should take over all my goods. That being settled, I will ask to foster your son Olaf, and leave him all my wealth after my days are done; for I have no heir here in this land, and I think my means would be better bestowed then, than that the kinsmen of Vigdis should grab it." To this Hoskuld agreed, and had it bound by witnesses. This Melkorka took heavily, deeming the fostering too low. Hoskuld said she ought not to think that, "for Thord is an old man, and childless, and I wish Olaf to have all his money after his day, but you can always go to see him at any time you like." Thereupon Thord took Olaf to him, seven years old, and loved him very dearly. Hearing this, the men who had on hand the case against Thord Goddi thought that now it would be even more difficult than before to lay claim to the money. Hoskuld sent some handsome presents to Thord Yeller, and bade him not be angry over this, seeing that in law they had no claim on Thord's money, inasmuch as Vigdis had brought no true charges against Thord, or any such as justified desertion by her. "Moreover, Thord was no worse a man for casting about for counsel to rid himself of a man that had been thrust upon his means, and was as beset with guilt as a juniper bush is with prickles." But when these words came to Thord from Hoskuld, and with them large gifts of money, then Thord allowed himself to be pacified, and said he thought the money was well placed that Hoskuld looked after, and took the gifts; and all was quiet after that, but their friendship was rather less warm than formerly. Olaf grew up with Thord, and became a great man and strong. He was so handsome that his equal was not to be found, and when he was twelve years old he rode to the Thing meeting, and men in other countrysides looked upon it as a great errand to go, and to wonder at the splendid way he was made. In keeping herewith was the manner of Olaf's war-gear and raiment, and therefore he was easily distinguished from all other men. Thord got on much better after Olaf came to live with him. Hoskuld gave Olaf a nickname, and called him Peacock, and the name stuck to him.

Chap. XVII: About Viga Hrapp's Ghost, A.D. 950

The tale is told of Hrapp that he became most violent in his behaviour, and did his neighbours such harm that they could hardly hold their own against him. But from the time that Olaf grew up Hrapp got no hold of Thord. Hrapp had the same temper, but his powers waned, in that old age was fast coming upon him, so that he had to lie in bed. Hrapp called Vigdis, his wife, to him, and said, "I have never been of ailing health in life," said he, "and it is therefore most likely that this illness will put an end to our life together. Now, when I am dead, I wish my grave to be dug in the doorway of my fire hall, and that I be put: thereinto, standing there in the doorway; then I shall be able to keep a more searching eye on my dwelling." After that Hrapp died, and all was done as he said, for Vigdis did not dare do otherwise. And as evil as he had been to deal with in his life, just so he was by a great deal more when he was dead, for he walked again a great deal after he was dead. People said that he killed most of his servants in his ghostly appearances. He caused a great deal of trouble to those who lived near, and the house of Hrappstead became deserted. Vigdis, Hrapp's wife, betook herself west to Thorstein Swart, her brother. He took her and her goods in. And now things went as before, in that men went to find Hoskuld, and told him all the troubles that Hrapp was doing to them, and asked him to do something to put an end to this. Hoskuld said this should be done, and he went with some men to Hrappstead, and has Hrapp dug up, and taken away to a place near to which cattle were least likely to roam or men to go about. After that Hrapp's walkings-again abated somewhat. Sumarlid, Hrapp's son, inherited all Hrapp's wealth, which was both great and goodly. Sumarlid set up household at Hrappstead the next spring; but after he had kept house there for a little time he was seized of frenzy, and died shortly afterwards. Now it was the turn of his mother, Vigdis, to take there alone all this wealth; but as she would not go to the estate of Hrappstead, Thorstein Swart took all the wealth to himself to take care of. Thorstein was by then rather old, though still one of the most healthy and hearty of men.

Chap. XVIII: Of the Drowning of Thorstein Swart

At that time there rose to honour among men in Thorness, the kinsmen of Thorstein, named Bork the Stout and his brother, Thorgrim. It was soon found out how these brothers would fain be the greatest men there, and were most highly accounted of. And when Thorstein found that out, he would not elbow them aside, and so made it known to people that he wished to change his abode, and take his household to Hrappstead, in Salmon-river-Dale. Thorstein Swart got ready to start after the spring Thing, but his cattle were driven round along the shore. Thorstein got on board a ferry-boat, and took twelve men with him; and Thorarin, his brother-in-law, and Osk, Thorstein's daughter, and Hild, her daughter, who was three years old, went with them too. Thorstein fell in with a high south-westerly gale, and they sailed up towards the roosts, and into that roost which is called Coal-chest-Roost, which is the biggest of the currents in Broadfirth. They made little way sailing, chiefly because the tide was ebbing, and the wind was not favourable, the weather being squally, with high wind when the squalls broke over, but with little wind between whiles. Thorstein steered, and had the braces of the sail round his shoulders, because the boat was blocked up with goods, chiefly piled-up chests, and the cargo was heaped up very high; but land was near about, while on the boat there was but little way, because of the raging current against them. Then they sailed on to a hidden rock, but were not wrecked. Thorstein bade them let down the sail as quickly as possible, and take punt poles to push off the ship. This shift was tried to no avail, because on either board the sea was so deep that the poles struck no bottom; so they were obliged to wait for the incoming tide, and now the water ebbs away under the ship. Throughout the day they saw a seal in the current larger by much than any others, and through the day it would be swimming round about the ship, with flappers none of the shortest, and to all of them it seemed that in him there were human eyes. Thorstein bade them shoot the seal, and they tried, but it came

to nought. Now the tide rose; and just as the ship was getting afloat there broke upon them a violent squall, and the boat heeled over, and every one on board the boat was drowned, save one man, named Gudmund, who drifted ashore with some timber. The place where he was washed up was afterwards called Gudmund's Isles. Gudrid, whom Thorkell Trefill had for wife, was entitled to the inheritance left by Thorstein, her father. These tidings spread far and near of the drowning of Thorstein Swart, and the men who were lost there. Thorkell sent straightway for the man Gudmund, who had been washed ashore, and when he came and met Thorkell, he (Thorkell) struck a bargain with him, to the end that he should tell the story of the loss of lives even as he (Thorkell) was going to dictate it to him. Gudmund agreed. Thorkell now asked him to tell the story of this mishap in the hearing of a good many people. Then Gudmund spake on this wise: "Thorstein was drowned first, and then his son-in-law, Thorarin"—so that then it was the turn of Hild to come in for the money, as she was the daughter of Thorarin. Then he said the maiden was drowned, because the next in inheritance to her was Osk, her mother, and she lost her life the last of them, so that all the money thus came to Thorkell Trefill, in that his wife Gudrid must take inheritance after her sister. Now this tale is spread abroad by Thorkell and his men; but Gudmund ere this had told the tale in somewhat another way. Now the kinsmen of Thorarin misdoubted this tale somewhat, and said they would not believe it unproved, and claimed one-half of the heritage against Thorkell; but Thorkell maintained it belonged to him alone, and bade that ordeal should be taken on the matter, according to their custom. This was the ordeal at that time, that men had had to pass under "earth-chain," which was a slip of sward cut loose from the soil, but both ends thereof were left adhering to the earth, and the man who should go through with the ordeal should walk thereunder. Thorkell Trefill now had some misgivings himself as to whether the deaths of the people had indeed taken place as he and Gudmund had said the second time. Heathen men deemed that on them rested no less responsibility when ceremonies of this kind had to be gone through than Christian men do when ordeals are decreed. He who passed under "earth-chain" cleared himself if the sward-slip did not fall down upon him. Thorkell made an arrangement with two men that they should feign quarrelling over something or another, and be close to the spot when the ordeal was being gone through with, and touch the sward-slip so unmistakably that all men might see that it was they who knocked it down. After this comes forward he who was to go through with the ordeal, and at the nick of time when he had got under the "earth-chain," these men who had been put up to it fall on each other with weapons, meeting close to the arch of the sward-slip, and lie there fallen, and down tumbles the "earth-chain," as was likely enough. Then men rush up between them and part them, which was easy enough, for they fought with no mind to do any harm. Thorkell Trefill then asked people as to what they thought about the ordeal, and all his men now said that it would have turned out all right if no one had spoilt it. Then Thorkell took all the chattels to himself, but the land at Hrapstead was left to lie fallow.

Chap. XIX: Hrut Comes to Iceland

Now of Hoskuld it is to be told that his state is one of great honour, and that he is a great chieftain. He had in his keep a great deal of money that belonged to his (half) brother, Hrut, Herjolf's son. Many men would have it that Hoskuld's means would be heavily cut into if he should be made to pay to the full the heritage of his (Hrut's) mother. Hrut was of the bodyguard of King Harald, Gunnhild's son, and was much honoured by him, chiefly for the reason that he approved himself the best man in all deeds of manly trials, while, on the other hand, Gunnhild, the Queen, loved him so much that she held there was not his equal within the guard, either in talking or in anything else. Even when men were compared, and noblemen therein were pointed to, all men easily saw that Gunnhild thought that at the bottom there must be sheer thoughtlessness, or else envy, if any man was said to be Hrut's equal. Now, inasmuch as Hrut had in Iceland much money to look after, and many noble kinsfolk to go and see, he desired to

go there, and now arrays his journey for Iceland. The king gave him a ship at parting, and said he had proved a brave man and true. Gunnhild saw Hrut off to his ship, and said, "Not in a hushed voice shall this be spoken, that I have proved you to be a most noble man, in that you have prowess equal to the best man here in this land, but are in wits a long way before them". Then she gave him a gold ring and bade him farewell. Whereupon she drew her mantle over her head and went swiftly home. Hrut went on board his ship, and put to sea. He had a good breeze, and came to Broadfirth. He sailed up the bay, up to the island, and, steering in through Broadsound, he landed at Combness, where he put his gangways to land. The news of the coming of this ship spread about, as also that Hrut, Herjolf's son, was the captain. Hoskuld gave no good cheer to these tidings, and did not go to meet Hrut. Hrut put up his ship, and made her snug. He built himself a dwelling, which since has been called Combness. Then he rode to see Hoskuld, to get his share of his mother's inheritance. Hoskuld said he had no money to pay him, and said his mother had not gone without means out of Iceland when she met with Herjolf. Hrut liked this very ill, but rode away, and there the matter rested. All Hrut's kinsfolk, excepting Hoskuld, did honour to Hrut. Hrut now lived three winters at Combness, and was always demanding the money from Hoskuld at the Thing meetings and other law gatherings, and he spoke well on the matter. And most men held that Hrut had right on his side. Hoskuld said that Thorgerd had not married Herjolf by his counsel, and that he was her lawful guardian, and there the matter dropped. That same autumn Hoskuld went to a feast at Thord Goddi's, and hearing that, Hrut rode with twelve men to Hoskuldstead and took away twenty oxen, leaving as many behind. Then he sent some men to Hoskuld, telling them where he might search for the cattle. Hoskuld's house-carles sprang forth with up, and seized their weapons, and words were sent to the nearest neighbours for help, so that they were a party of fifteen together, and they rode each one as fast as they possibly could. Hrut and his followers did not see the pursuit till they were a little way from the enclosure at Combness. And forthwith he and his men jumped off their horses, and tied them up, and went forward unto a certain sandhill. Hrut said that there they would make a stand, and added that though the money claim against Hoskuld sped slowly, never should that be said that he had run away before his thralls. Hrut's followers said that they had odds to deal with. Hrut said he would never heed that; said they should fare all the worse the more they were in number. The men of Salmon-river-Dale now jumped off their horses, and got ready to fight. Hrut bade his men not trouble themselves about the odds, and goes for them at a rush. Hrut had a helmet on his head, a drawn sword in one hand and a shield in the other. He was of all men the most skilled at arms. Hrut was then so wild that few could keep up with him. Both sides fought briskly for a while; but the men of Salmon-river-Dale very soon found that in Hrut they had to deal with one for whom they were no match, for now he slew two men at every onslaught. After that the men of Salmon-river-Dale begged for peace. Hrut replied that they should surely have peace. All the house-carles of Hoskuld who were yet alive were wounded, and four were killed. Hrut then went home, being somewhat wounded himself; but his followers only slightly or not at all, for he had been the foremost in the fight. The place has since been called Fight-Dale where they fought. After that Hrut had the cattle killed. Now it must be told how Hoskuld got men together in a hurry when he heard of the robbery and rode home. Much at the same time as he arrived his house-carles came home too, and told how their journey had gone anything but smoothly. Hoskuld was wild with wrath at this, and said he meant to take at Hrut's hand no robbery or loss of lives again, and gathered to him men all that day. Then Jorunn, his wife, went and talked to him, and asked him what he had made his mind up to. He said, "It is but little I have made up my mind to, but I fain would that men should oftener talk of something else than the slaying of my house-carles". Jorunn answered, "You are after a fearful deed if you mean to kill such a man as your brother, seeing that some men will have it that it would not have been without cause if Hrut had seized these goods even before this; and now he has shown that, taking after the race he comes from, he means no longer to be an outcast, kept from what

is his own. Now, surely he cannot have made up his mind to try his strength with you till he knew that he might hope for some backing-up from the more powerful among men; for, indeed, I am told that messages have been passing in quiet between Hrut and Thord Yeller. And to me, at least, such matters seem worthy of heed being paid to them. No doubt Thord will be glad to back up matters of this kind, seeing how clear are the bearings of the case. Moreover you know, Hoskuld, that since the quarrel between Thord Goddi and Vigdis, there has not been the same fond friendship between you and Thord Yeller as before, although by means of gifts you staved off the enmity of him and his kinsmen in the beginning. I also think, Hoskuld," she said, "that in that matter, much to the trial of their temper, they feel they have come off worst at the hands of yourself and your son, Olaf. Now this seems to me the wiser counsel: to make your brother an honourable offer, for there a hard grip from greedy wolf may be looked for. I am sure that Hrut will take that matter in good part, for I am told he is a wise man, and he will see that that would be an honour to both of you." Hoskuld quieted down greatly at Jorunn's speech, and thought this was likely to be true. Then men went between them who were friends of both sides, bearing words of peace from Hoskuld to Hrut. Hrut received them well, and said he would indeed make friends with Hoskuld, and added that he had long been ready for their coming to terms as behoved kinsmen, if but Hoskuld had been willing to grant him his right. Hrut also said he was ready to do honour to Hoskuld for what he on his side had misdone. So now these matters were shaped and settled between the brothers, who now take to living together in good brotherhood from this time forth. Hrut now looks after his homestead, and became mighty man of his ways. He did not mix himself up in general things, but in whatever matter he took a part he would have his own way. Hrut now moved his dwelling, and abode to old age at a place which now is called Hrutstead. He made a temple in his home-field, of which the remains are still to be seen. It is called Trolls' walk now, and there is the high road. Hrut married a woman named Unn, daughter of Mord Fiddle. Unn left him, and thence sprang the quarrels between the men of Salmon-river-Dale and the men of Fleetlihe. Hrut's second wife was named Thorbjorg. She was Armod's daughter. Hrut married a third wife, but her we do not name. Hrut had sixteen sons and ten daughters by these two wives. And men say that one summer Hrut rode to the Thing meeting, and fourteen of his sons were with him. Of this mention is made, because it was thought a sign of greatness and might. All his sons were right goodly men.

Chap. XX: Melkorka's Marriage and Olaf the Peacock's Journey, A.D. 955 Of Thorliek Hoskuldson

Hoskuld now remained quietly at home, and began now to sink into old age, and his sons were now all grown up. Thorliek sets up household of his own at a place called Combness, and Hoskuld handed over to him his portion. After that he married a woman named Gjaflaug, daughter of Arnbjorn, son of Sleitu Bjorn, and Thordaug, the daughter of Thord of Headland. It was a noble match, Gjaflaug being a very beautiful and high-minded woman. Thorliek was not an easy man to get on with, but was most warlike. There was not much friendship between the kinsmen Hrut and Thorliek. Bard Hoskuld's son stayed at home with his father, looked after the household affairs no less than Hoskuld himself. The daughters of Hoskuld do not have much to do with this story, yet men are known who are descended from them. Olaf, Hoskuld's son, was now grown up, and was the handsomest of all men that people ever set eyes on. He arrayed himself always well, both as to clothes and weapons. Melkorka, Olaf's mother, lived at Melkorkastead, as has been told before. Hoskuld looked less after Melkorka's household ways than he used to do, saying that that matter concerned Olaf, her son. Olaf said he would give her such help as he had to offer her. Melkorka thought Hoskuld had done shamefully by her, and makes up her mind to do something to him at which he should not be over pleased. Thorbjorn Skrjup had chiefly had on hand the care of Melkorka's household affairs. He had made her an offer of marriage, after she had been an

householder for but a little while, but Melkorka refused him flatly. There was a ship up by Board-Ere in Ramfirth, and Orn was the name of the captain. He was one of the bodyguard of King Harald, Gunnhild's son. Melkorka spoke to Olaf, her son, and said that she wished he should journey abroad to find his noble relations. "For I have told the truth that Myrkjartan is really my father, and he is king of the Irish and it would be easy for you betake you on board the ship that is now at Board-Ere." Olaf said, "I have spoken about it to my father, but he seemed to want to have but little to do with it; and as to the manner of my foster-father's money affairs, it so happens that his wealth is more in land or cattle than in stores of islandic market goods." Melkorka said, "I cannot bear your being called the son of a slave-woman any longer; and if it stands in the way of the journey, that you think you have not enough money, then I would rather go to the length even of marrying Thorbjorn, if then you should be more willing than before to betake yourself to the journey. For I think he will be willing to hand out to you as much wares as you think you may need, if I give my consent to his marrying me. Above all I look to this, that then Hoskuld will like two things mightily ill when he comes to hear of them, namely, that you have gone out of the land, and that I am married." Olaf bade his mother follow her own counsel. After that Olaf talked to Thorbjorn as to how he wished to borrow wares of him, and a great deal thereof. Thorbjorn answered, "I will do it on one condition, and that is that I shall marry Melkorka for them; it seems to me, you will be as welcome to my money as to that which you have in your keep." Olaf said that this should then be settled; whereupon they talked between them of such matters as seemed needful, but all these things they agreed should be kept quiet. Hoskuld wished Olaf to ride with him to the Thing. Olaf said he could not do that on account of household affairs, as he also wanted to fence off a grazing paddock for lambs by Salmon River. Hoskuld was very pleased that he should busy himself with the homestead. Then Hoskuld rode to the Thing; but at Lambstead a wedding feast was arrayed, and Olaf settled the agreement alone. Olaf took out of the undivided estate thirty hundred ells' worth of wares, and should pay no money for them. Bard, Hoskuld's son, was at the wedding, and was a party with them to all these doings. When the feast was ended Olaf rode off to the ship, and found Orn the captain, and took berth with him. Before Olaf and Melkorka parted she gave him a great gold finger-ring, and said, "This gift my father gave me for a teething gift, and I know he will recognise it when he sees it." She also put into his hands a knife and a belt, and bade him give them to her nurse: "I am sure she will not doubt these tokens." And still further Melkorka spake, "I have fitted you out from home as best I know how, and taught you to speak Irish, so that it will make no difference to you where you are brought to shore in Ireland." After that they parted. There arose forthwith a fair wind, when Olaf got on board, and they sailed straightway out to sea.

Chap. XXI: Olaf the Peacock goes to Ireland, A.D. 955

Now Hoskuld came back from the Thing and heard these tidings, and was very much displeased. But seeing that his near akin were concerned in the matter, he quieted down and let things alone. Olaf and his companions had a good voyage, and came to Norway. Orn urges Olaf to go to the court of King Harald, who, he said, bestowed goodly honour on men of no better breeding than Olaf was. Olaf said he thought he would take that counsel. Olaf and Orn now went to the court, and were well received. The king at once recognised Olaf for the sake of his kindred, and forthwith bade him stay with him. Gunnhild paid great heed to Olaf when she knew he was Hrut's brother's son; but some men would have it, that she took pleasure in talking to Olaf without his needing other people's aid to introduce him. As the winter wore on, Olaf grew sadder of mood. Orn asked him what was the matter of his sorrow? Olaf answered, "I have on hand a journey to go west over the sea; and I set much store by it and that you should lend me your help, so that it may be undertaken in the course of next summer." Orn bade Olaf not set his heart on going, and said he did not know of any ships going west over the sea. Gunnhild joined

in their talk, and said, "Now I hear you talk together in a manner that has not happened before, in that each of you wants to have his own way!" Olaf greeted Gunnhild well, without letting drop their talk. After that Orn went away, but Gunnhild and Olaf kept conversing together. Olaf told her of his wish, and how much store he set by carrying it out, saying he knew for certain that Myrkjartan, the king, was his mother's father. Then Gunnhild said, "I will lend you help for this voyage, so that you may go on it as richly furnished as you please." Olaf thanked her for her promise. Then Gunnhild had a ship prepared and a crew got together, and bade Olaf say how many men he would have to go west over the sea with him. Olaf fixed the number at sixty; but said that it was a matter of much concern to him, that such a company should be more like warriors than merchants. She said that so it should be; and Orn is the only man mentioned by name in company with Olaf on this journey. The company were well fitted out. King Harald and Gunnhild led Olaf to his ship, and they said they wished to bestow on him their good-luck over and above other friendship they had bestowed on him already. King Harald said that was an easy matter; for they must say that no goodlier a man had in their days come out of Iceland. Then Harald the king asked how old a man he was. Olaf answered, "I am now eighteen winters." The king replied, "Of exceeding worth, indeed, are such men as you are, for as yet you have left the age of child but a short way behind; and be sure to come and see us when you come back again." Then the king and Gunnhild bade Olaf farewell. Then Olaf and his men got on board, and sailed out to sea. They came in for unfavourable weather through the summer, had fogs plentiful, and little wind, and what there was was unfavourable; and wide about the main they drifted, and on most on board fell "sea-bewilderment." But at last the fog lifted over-head; and the wind rose, and they put up sail. Then they began to discuss in which direction Ireland was to be sought; and they did not agree on that. Orn said one thing, and most of the men went against him, and said that Orn was all bewildered: they should rule who were the greater in number. Then Olaf was asked to decide. He said, "I think we should follow the counsel of the wisest; for the counsels of foolish men I think will be of all the worse service for us in the greater number they gather together." And now they deemed the matter settled, since Olaf spake in this manner; and Orn took the steering from that time. They sailed for days and nights, but always with very little wind. One night the watchmen leapt up, and bade every one wake at once, and said they saw land so near that they had almost struck on it. The sail was up, but there was but little wind. Every one got up, and Orn bade them clear away from the land, if they could. Olaf said, "That is not the way out of our plight, for I see reefs all about astern; so let down the sail at once, and we will take our counsel when there is daylight, and we know what land this is." Then they cast anchors, and they caught bottom at once. There was much talk during the night as to where they could be come to; and when daylight was up they recognised that it was Ireland. Orn said, "I don't think we have come to a good place, for this is far away from the harbours or market-towns, whose strangers enjoy peace; and we are now left high and dry, like sticklebacks, and near enough, I think, I come to the laws of the Irish in saying that they will lay claim to the goods we have on board as their lawful prize, for as flotsam they put down ships even when sea has ebbed out shorter from the stern (than here)." Olaf said no harm would happen, "But I have seen that to-day there is a gathering of men up inland; so the Irish think, no doubt, the arrival of this ship a great thing. During the ebb-tide to-day I noticed that there was a dip, and that out of the dip the sea fell without emptying it out; and if our ship has not been damaged, we can put out our boat and tow the ship into it." There was a bottom of loam where they had been riding at anchor, so that not a plank of the ship was damaged. So Olaf and his men tow their boat to the dip, cast anchor there. Now, as day drew on, crowds drifted down to the shore. At last two men rowed a boat out to the ship. They asked what men they were who had charge of that ship, and Olaf answered, speaking in Irish, to their inquiries. When the Irish knew they were Norwegians they pleaded their law, and bade them give up their goods; and if they did so, they would do them no harm till the king had sat in judgment on their case. Olaf said the law only

held good when merchants had no interpreter with them. "But I can say with truth these are peaceful men, and we will not give ourselves up untried." The Irish then raised a great war-cry, and waded out into the sea, and wished to drag the ship, with them on board, to the shore, the water being no deeper than reaching up to their armpits, or to the belts of the tallest. But the pool was so deep where the ship was floating that they could not touch the bottom. Olaf bade the crew fetch out their weapons, and range in line of battle from stem to stern on the ship; and so thick they stood, that shield overlapped shield all round the ship, and a spear-point stood out at the lower end of every shield. Olaf walked fore to the prow, and was thus arrayed: he had a coat of mail, and a gold-redened helmet on his head; girt with a sword with gold-inlaid hilt, and in his hand a barbed spear chased and well engraved. A red shield he had before him, on which was drawn a lion in gold. When the Irish saw this array fear shot through their hearts, and they thought it would not be so easy a matter as they had thought to master the booty. So now the Irish break their journey, and run all together to a village near. Then there arose great murmur in the crowd, as they deemed that, sure enough, this must be a warship, and that they must expect many others; so they sent speedily word to the king, which was easy, as he was at that time a short way off, feasting. Straightway he rides with a company of men to where the ship was. Between the land and the place where the ship lay afloat the space was no greater than that one might well hear men talking together. Now Olaf stood forth in the same arrayal whereof is written before, and men marvelled much how noble was the appearance of the man who was the captain of the ship. But when the shipmates of Olaf see how a large company of knights rides towards them, looking a company of the bravest, they grow hushed, for they deemed here were great odds to deal with. But when Olaf heard the murmur which went round among his followers, he bade them take heart, "For now our affairs are in a fair way; the Irish are now greeting Myrkjartan, their king." Then they rode so near to the ship, that each could hear what the other said. The king asked who was the master of the ship. Olaf told his name, and asked who was the valiant-looking knight with whom he then was talking. He answered, "I am called Myrkjartan." Olaf asked, "Are you then a king of the Irish?" He said he was. Then the king asked Olaf for news commonly talked of, and Olaf gave good answers as to all news he was asked about. Then the king asked whence they had put to sea, and whose men they were. And still the king asked, more searchingly than before, about Olaf's kindred, for the king found that this man was of haughty bearing, and would not answer any further than the king asked. Olaf said, "Let it be known to you that we ran our ship afloat from the coast of Norway, and these are of the bodyguard of King Harald, the son of Gunnhild, who are here on board. And as for my race, I have, sire, to tell you this, that my father lives in Iceland, and is named Hoskuld, a man of high birth; but of my mother's kindred, I think you must have seen many more than I have. For my mother is called Melkorka, and it has been told me as a truth that she is your daughter, king. Now, this has driven me upon this long journey, and to me it is a matter most weighty what answer you give in my case." The king then grew silent, and had a converse with his men. The wise men asked the king what might be the real truth of the story that this man was telling. The king answered, "This is clearly seen in this Olaf, that he is high-born man, whether he be a kinsman of mine or not, as well as this, that of all men he speaks the best of Irish." After that the king stood up, and said, "Now I will give answer to your speech, in so far as we grant to you and all your shipmates peace; but on the kinship you claim with us, we must talk more before I give answer to that." After that they put out their gangways to the shore, and Olaf and his followers went on land from the ship; and the Irish now marvel much how warrior-like these men are. Olaf greeted the king well, taking off his helmet and bowing to the king, who welcomes Olaf with all fondness. Thereupon they fall to talking together, Olaf pleading his case again in a speech long and frank; and at the end of his speech he said he had a ring on his hand that Melkorka had given him at parting in Iceland, saying "that you, king, gave it her as a tooth gift." The king took and looked at the ring, and his face grew wondrous red to look at; and then the king

said, "True enough are the tokens, and become by no means less notable thereby that you have so many of your mother's family features, and that even by them you might be easily recognised; and because of these things I will in sooth acknowledge your kinship, Olaf, by the witnessing of these men that here are near and hear my speech. And this shall also follow that I will ask you to my court, with all your suite, but the honour of you all will depend thereon of what worth as a man I find you to be when I try you more." After that the king orders riding-horses to be given to them, and appoints men to look after their ship, and to guard the goods belonging to them. The king now rode to Dublin, and men thought this great tidings, that with the king should be journeying the son of his daughter, who had been carried off in war long ago when she was only fifteen winters old. But most startled of all at these tidings was the foster-mother of Melkorka, who was then bed-ridden, both from heavy sickness and old age; yet she walked with no staff even to support her, to meet Olaf. The king said to Olaf, "Here is come Melkorka's foster-mother, and she will wish to hear all the tidings you can tell about Melkorka's life." Olaf took her with open arms, and set the old woman on his knee, and said her foster-daughter was well settled and in a good position in Iceland. Then Olaf put in her hands the knife and the belt, and the old woman recognised the gifts, and wept for joy, and said it was easy to see that Melkorka's son was one of high mettle, and no wonder, seeing what stock he comes of. The old woman was strong and well, and in good spirits all that winter. The king was seldom at rest, for at that time the lands in the west were at all times raided by war-bands. The king drove from his land that winter both Vikings and raiders. Olaf was with his suite in the king's ship, and those who came against them thought his was indeed a grim company to deal with. The king talked over with Olaf and his followers all matters needing counsel, for Olaf proved himself to the king both wise and eager-minded in all deeds of prowess. But towards the latter end of the winter the king summoned a Thing, and great numbers came. The king stood up and spoke. He began his speech thus: "You all know that last autumn there came hither a man who is the son of my daughter, and high-born also on his father's side; and it seems to me that Olaf is a man of such prowess and courage that here such men are not to be found. Now I offer him my kingdom after my day is done, for Olaf is much more suitable for a ruler than my own sons." Olaf thanked him for this offer with many graceful and fair words, and said he would not run the risk as to how his sons might behave when Myrkjartan was no more; said it was better to gain swift honour than lasting shame; and added that he wished to go to Norway when ships could safely journey from land to land, and that his mother would have little delight in life if he did not return to her. The king bade Olaf do as he thought best. Then the Thing was broken up. When Olaf's ship was ready, the king saw him off on board; and gave him a spear chased with gold, and a gold-bedecked sword, and much money besides. Olaf begged that he might take Melkorka's foster-mother with him; but the king said there was no necessity for that, so she did not go. Then Olaf got on board his ship, and he and the king parted with the greatest friendship. Then Olaf sailed out to sea. They had a good voyage, and made land in Norway; and Olaf's journey became very famous. They set up their ship; and Olaf got horses for himself, and went, together with his followers, to find King Harald.

Chap. XXII: Olaf the Peacock comes Home to Iceland, A.D. 957

Olaf Hoskuldson then went to the court of King Harald. The king gave him a good welcome, but Gunnhild a much better. With many fair words they begged him to stay with them, and Olaf agreed to it, and both he and Orn entered the king's court. King Harald and Gunnhild set so great a store by Olaf that no foreigner had ever been held in such honour by them. Olaf gave to the king and Gunnhild many rare gifts, which he had got west in Ireland. King Harald gave Olaf at Yule a set of clothes made out of scarlet stuff. So now Olaf stayed there quietly all the winter. In the spring, as it was wearing on, Olaf and the king had a conversation together, and Olaf begged the king's leave to go to Iceland

in the summer. "For I have noble kinsfolk there I want to go and see." The king answered, "It would be more to my mind that you should settle down with us, and take whatever position in our service you like best yourself." Olaf thanked the king for all the honour he was offering him, but said he wished very much to go to Iceland, if that was not against the king's will. The king answered, "Nothing shall be done in this in an unfriendly manner to you, Olaf. You shall go out to Iceland in the summer, for I see you have set your heart on it; but neither trouble nor toil shall you have over your preparations, for I will see after all that," and thereupon they part talking. King Harald had a ship launched in the spring; it was a merchant ship, both great and good. This ship the king ordered to be laden with wood, and fitted out with full rigging. When the ship was ready the king had Olaf called to him, and said, "This ship shall be your own, Olaf, for I should not like you to start from Norway this summer as a passenger in any one else's ship." Olaf thanked the king in fair words for his generosity. After that Olaf got ready for his journey; and when he was ready and a fair wind arose, Olaf sailed out to sea, and King Harald and he parted with the greatest affection. That summer Olaf had a good voyage. He brought his ship into Ramfirth, to Board-Ere. The arrival of the ship was soon heard of, and also who the captain was. Hoskuld heard of the arrival of Olaf, his son, and was very much pleased, and rode forthwith north to Hrutfjard with some men, and there was a joyful meeting between the father and son. Hoskuld invited Olaf to come to him, and Olaf said he would agree to that; so he set up his ship, but his goods were brought (on horseback) from the north. And when this business was over Olaf himself rode with twelve men home to Hoskuldstead, and Hoskuld greeted his son joyfully, and his brothers also received him fondly, as well as all his kinsfolk; but between Olaf and Bard was love the fondest. Olaf became very renowned for this journey; and now was proclaimed the descent of Olaf, that he was the daughter's son of Myrkjartan, king of Ireland. The news of this spread over the land, as well as of the honour that mighty men, whom he had gone to see, had bestowed on him. Melkorka came soon to see Olaf, her son, and Olaf greeted her with great joy. She asked about many things in Ireland, first of her father and then of her other relations. Olaf replied to everything she asked. Then she asked if her foster-mother still lived. Olaf said she was still alive. Melkorka asked why he had not tried to give her the pleasure of bringing her over to Iceland. Olaf replied, "They would not allow me to bring your foster-mother out of Ireland, mother." "That may be so," she replied, and it could be seen that this she took much to heart. Melkorka and Thorbjorn had one son, who was named Lambi. He was a tall man and strong, like his father in looks as well as in temper. When Olaf had been in Iceland a month, and spring came on, father and son took counsel together. "I will, Olaf," said Hoskuld, "that a match should be sought for you, and that then you should take over the house of your foster-father at Goddirstead, where still there are great means stored up, and that then you should look after the affairs of that household under my guidance." Olaf answered, "Little have I set my mind on that sort of thing hitherto; besides, I do not know where that woman lives whom to marry would mean any great good luck to me. You must know I shall look high for a wife. But I see clearly that you would not have broached this matter till you had made up your mind as to where it was to end." Hoskuld said, "You guess that right. There is a man named Egil. He is Skallagrim's son. He lives at Borg, in Borgarfjord. This Egil has a daughter who is called Thorgerd, and she is the woman I have made up my mind to woo on your behalf, for she is the very best match in all Borgarfjord, and even if one went further afield. Moreover, it is to be looked for, that an alliance with the Mere-men would mean more power to you." Olaf answered, "Herein I shall trust to your foresight, for if this match were to come off it would be altogether to my liking. But this you must bear in mind, father, that should this matter be set forth, and not come off, I should take it very ill." Hoskuld answered, "I think I shall venture to bring the matter about." Olaf bade him do as he liked. Now time wears on towards the Thing. Hoskuld prepares his journey from home with a crowded company, and Olaf, his son, also accompanies him on the journey. They set up their booth. A great many people were there. Egil Skallagrim's son was

at the Thing. Every one who saw Olaf remarked what a handsome man he was, and how noble his bearing, well arrayed as he was as to weapons and clothes.

Chap. XXIII: The Marriage of Olaf Peacock and Thorgerd, the Daughter of Egil, A.D. 959

It is told how one day the father and son, Hoskuld and Olaf, went forth from their booth to find Egil. Egil greeted them well, for he and Hoskuld knew each other very well by word of mouth. Hoskuld now broaches the wooing on behalf of Olaf, and asks for the hand of Thorgerd. She was also at the Thing. Egil took the matter well, and said he had always heard both father and son well spoken of, "and I also know, Hoskuld," said Egil, "that you are a high-born man and of great worth, and Olaf is much renowned on account of his journey, and it is no wonder that such men should look high for a match, for he lacks neither family nor good looks; but yet this must be talked over with Thorgerd, for it is no man's task to get Thorgerd for wife against her will." Hoskuld said, "I wish, Egil, that you would talk this over with your daughter." Egil said that that should be done. Egil now went away to find his daughter, and they talked together. Egil said, "There is here a man named Olaf, who is Hoskuld's son, and he is now one of the most renowned of men. Hoskuld, his father, has broached a wooing on behalf of Olaf, and has sued for your hand; and I have left that matter mostly for you to deal with. Now I want to know your answer. But it seems to me that it behoves you to give a good answer to such a matter, for this match is a noble one." Thorgerd answered, "I have often heard you say that you love me best of all your children, but now it seems to me you make that a falsehood if you wish me to marry the son of a bonds-woman, however goodly and great a dandy he may be." Egil said, "In this matter you are not so well up, as in others. Have you not heard that he is the son of the daughter of Myrkjartan, king of Ireland? so that he is much higher born on his mother's side than on his father's, which, however, would be quite good enough for us." Thorgerd would not see this; and so they dropped the talk, each being somewhat of a different mind. The next day Egil went to Hoskuld's booth. Hoskuld gave him a good welcome, and so they fell a-talking together. Hoskuld asked how this wooing matter had sped. Egil held out but little hope, and told him all that had come to pass. Hoskuld said it looked like a closed matter, "Yet I think you have behaved well." Olaf did not hear this talk of theirs. After that Egil went away. Olaf now asks, "How speeds the wooing?" Hoskuld said, "It pointed to slow speed on her side." Olaf said, "It is now as I told you, father, that I should take it very ill if in answer (to the wooing) I should have to take shaming words, seeing that the broaching of the wooing gives undue right to the wooed. And now I shall have my way so far, that this shall not drop here. For true is the saw, that 'others' errands eat the wolves'; and now I shall go straightway to Egil's booth." Hoskuld bade him have his own way. Olaf now dressed himself in this way, that he had on the scarlet clothes King Harald had given him, and a golden helmet on his head, and the gold-adorned sword in his hand that King Myrkjartan had given him. Then Hoskuld and Olaf went to Egil's booth. Hoskuld went first, and Olaf followed close on his heels. Egil greeted him well, and Hoskuld sat down by him, but Olaf stood up and looked about him. He saw a woman sitting on the dais in the booth, she was goodly and had the looks of one of high degree, and very well dressed. He thought to himself this must be Thorgerd, Egil's daughter. Olaf went up to the dais and sat down by her. Thorgerd greeted the man, and asked who he was. Olaf told his own and his father's name, and "You must think it very bold that the son of a slave should dare to sit down by you and presume to talk to you!" She said, "You cannot but mean that you must be thinking you have done deeds of greater daring than that of talking to women." Then they began to talk together, and they talked all day. But nobody heard their conversation. And before they parted Egil and Hoskuld were called to them; and the matter of Olaf's wooing was now talked over again, and Thorgerd came round to her father's wish. Now the affair was all easily settled and the betrothal took place. The honour was conceded to the Salmon-river-Dale men that the bride should be brought home to them, for by law the bride-groom should have

gone to the bride's home to be married. The wedding was to take place at Hoskuldstead when seven weeks summer had passed. After that Egil and Hoskuld separated. The father and son rode home to Hoskuldstead, and all was quiet the rest of the summer. After that things were got ready for the wedding at Hoskuldstead, and nothing was spared, for means were plentiful. The guests came at the time settled, and the Burgfirthen mustered in a great company. Egil was there, and Thorstein, his son. The bride was in the journey too, and with her a chosen company out of all the countryside. Hoskuld had also a great company awaiting them. The feast was a brave one, and the guests were seen off with good gifts on leaving. Olaf gave to Egil the sword, Myrkjartan's gift, and Egil's brow brightened greatly at the gift. Nothing in the way of tidings befell, and every one went home.

Chap. XXIV: The Building of Herdholt, A.D. 960

Olaf and Thorgerd lived at Hoskuldstead and loved each other very dearly; it was easily seen by every one that she was a woman of very high mettle, though she meddled little with every-day things, but whatever Thorgerd put her hand to must be carried through as she wished. Olaf and Thorgerd spent that winter turn and turn about at Hoskuldstead, or with Olaf's foster-father. In the spring Olaf took over the household business at Goddstead. The following summer Thord fell ill, and the illness ended in his death. Olaf had a cairn raised over him on the ness that runs out into the Salmon-river and is called Drafn-ness, with a wall round which is called Howes-garth. After that liegemen crowded to Olaf and he became a great chieftain. Hoskuld was not envious of this, for he always wished that Olaf should be consulted in all great matters. The place Olaf owned was the stateliest in Salmon-river-Dale. There were two brothers with Olaf, both named An. One was called An the White and the other An the Black. They had a third brother who was named Beiner the Strong. These were Olaf's smiths, and very valiant men. Thorgerd and Olaf had a daughter who was named Thurid. The land that Hrapp had owned all lay waste, as has been told before. Olaf thought that it lay well and set before his father his wishes on the matter; how they should send down to Trefill with this errand, that Olaf wished to buy the land and other things thereto belonging at Hrapptstead. It was soon arranged and the bargain settled, for Trefill saw that better was one crow in the hand than two in the wood. The bargain arranged was that Olaf should give three marks of silver for the land; yet that was not fair price, for the lands were wide and fair and very rich in useful produce, such as good salmon fishing and seal catching. There were wide woods too, a little further up than Hoskuldstead, north of the Salmon-river, in which was a space cleared, and it was well-nigh a matter of certainty that the flocks of Olaf would gather together there whether the weather was hard or mild. One autumn it befell that on that same hill Olaf had built a dwelling of the timber that was cut out of the forest, though some he got together from drift-wood strands. This was a very lofty dwelling. The buildings stood empty through the winter. The next spring Olaf went thither and first gathered together all his flocks which had grown to be a great multitude; for, indeed, no man was richer in live stock in all Broadfirth. Olaf now sent word to his father that he should be standing out of doors and have a look at his train as he was moving to his new home, and should give him his good wishes. Hoskuld said so it should be. Olaf now arranged how it should be done. He ordered that all the shiest of his cattle should be driven first and then the milking live stock, then came the dry cattle, and the pack horses came in the last place; and men were ranged with the animals to keep them from straying out of straight line. When the van of the train had got to the new homestead, Olaf was just riding out of Goddstead and there was nowhere a gap breaking the line. Hoskuld stood outside his door together with those of his household. Then Hoskuld spake, bidding Olaf his son welcome and abide all honour to this new dwelling of his, "And somehow my mind forebodes me that this will follow, that for a long time his name will be remembered." Jorunn his wife said, "Wealth enough the slave's son has got for his name to be long remembered." At the moment that the house-

carles had unloaded the pack horses Olaf rode into the place. Then he said, "Now you shall have your curiosity satisfied with regard to what you have been talking about all the winter, as to what this place shall be called; it shall be called Herdholt." Every one thought this a very happy name, in view of what used to happen there. Olaf now sets up his household at Herdholt, and a stately one it soon became, and nothing was lacking there. And now the honour of Olaf greatly increased, there being many causes to bring it about: Olaf was the most beloved of men, for whatever he had to do with affairs of men, he did so that all were well contented with their lot. His father backed him up very much towards being a widely honoured

man, and Olaf gained much in power from his alliance with the Mere-men. Olaf was considered the noblest of all Hoskuld's sons. The first winter that Olaf kept house at Herdholt, he had many servants and workmen, and work was divided amongst the house-carles; one looked after the dry cattle and another after the cows. The fold was out in the wood, some way from the homestead. One evening the man who looked after the dry cattle came to Olaf and asked him to make some other man look after the neat and "set apart for me some other work." Olaf answered, "I wish you to go on with this same work of yours." The man said he would sooner go away. "Then you think there is something wrong," said Olaf. "I will go this evening with you when you do up the cattle, and if I think there is any excuse for you in this I will say nothing about it, but otherwise you will find that your lot will take some turn for the worse." Olaf took his gold-set spear, the king's gift, in his hand, and left home, and with him the house-carle. There was some snow on the ground. They came to the fold, which was open, and Olaf bade the house-carle go in. "I will drive up the cattle and you tie them up as they come in." The house-carle went to the fold-door. And all unawares Olaf finds him leaping into his open arms. Olaf asked why he went on so terrified? He replied, "Hrapp stands in the doorway of the fold, and felt after me, but I have had my fill of wrestling with him." Olaf went to the fold door and struck at him with his spear. Hrapp took the socket of the spear in both hands and wrenched it aside, so that forthwith the spear shaft broke. Olaf was about to run at Hrapp but he disappeared there where he stood, and there they parted, Olaf having the shaft and Hrapp the spear-head. After that Olaf and the house-carle tied up the cattle and went home. Olaf saw the house-carle was not to blame for his grumbling. The next morning Olaf went to where Hrapp was buried and had him dug up. Hrapp was found undecayed, and there Olaf also found his spear-head. After that he had a pyre made and had Hrapp burnt on it, and his ashes were flung out to sea. After that no one had any more trouble with Hrapp's ghost.

Chap. XXV: About Hoskuld's Sons

Now Hoskuld's sons shall be told about. Thorliek, Hoskuld's son, had been a great seafarer, and taken service with men in lordly station when he was on his merchant voyages before he settled down as a householder, and a man of mark he was thought to be. He had also been on Viking raids, and given good account of himself by reason of his courage. Bard, Hoskuld's son, had also been a seafarer, and was well accounted of wherever he went, for he was the best of brave men and true, and a man of moderation in all things. Bard married a Broadfirth woman, named Astrid, who came of a good stock. Bard's son was named Thorarin, and his daughter Gudney, who married Hall, the son of Fight Styr, and from them are descended many great families. Hrut, Herjolf's son, gave a thrall of his, named Hrolf, his freedom, and with it a certain amount of money, and a dwelling-place where his land joined with Hoskuld's. And it lay so near the landmark that Hrut's people had made a mistake in the matter, and settled the freedman down on the land belonging to Hoskuld. He soon gained there much wealth. Hoskuld took it very much to heart that Hrut should have placed his freedman right up against his ear, and bade the freedman pay him money for the lands he lived on "for it is mine own." The freedman went to Hrut and told him all they had spoken together. Hrut bade him give no heed, and pay no money to Hoskuld. "For I do not know," he said, "to which of us the land be-

longed." So the freedman went home, and goes on with his household just as before. A little later, Thorliek, Hoskuld's son, went at the advice of his father to the dwelling of the freedman and took him and killed him, and Thorliek claimed as his and his father's own all the money the freedman had made. Hrut heard this, and he and his sons liked it very ill. They were most of them grown up, and the band of kinsmen was deemed a most forbidding one to grapple with. Hrut fell back on the law as to how this ought to turn out, and when the matter was searched into by lawyers, Hrut and his son stood at but little advantage, for it was held a matter of great weight that Hrut had set the freedman down without leave on Hoskuld's land, where he had made money, Thorliek having slain the man within his and his father's own lands. Hrut took his lot very much to heart; but things remained quiet. After that Thorliek had a homestead built on the boundary of Hrut and Hoskuld's lands, and it was called Combness. There Thorliek lived for a while, as has been told before. Thorliek begat a son of his wife. The boy was sprinkled with water and called Bolli. He was at an early age a very promising man.

Chap. XXVI: The Death of Hoskuld, A.D. 985

Hoskuld, Koll o' Dales' son, fell ill in his old age, and he sent for his sons and other kinsfolk, and when they were come Hoskuld spoke to the brothers Bard and Thorliek, and said, "I have taken some sickness, and as I have not been much in the way of falling ill before, I think this may bring me to death; and now, as you know, you are both begotten in wedlock, and are entitled to all inheritance left by me. But there is a third son of mine, one who is not born in wedlock, and I will ask you brothers to allow him, Olaf to wit, to be adopted, so that he take of my means one-third with you." Bard answered first, and said that he would do as his father wished, "for I look for honour from Olaf in every way, the more so the wealthier he becomes." Then Thorliek said, "It is far from my wish that Olaf be adopted; he has plenty of money already; and you, father, have for a long time given him a great deal, and for a very long time dealt unevenly with us. I will not freely give up the honour to which I am born." Hoskuld said, "Surely you will not rob me of the law that allows me to give twelve ounces to my son, seeing how high-born Olaf is on his mother's side." To this Thorliek now agreed. Then Hoskuld took the gold ring, Hakon's gift, that weighed a mark, and the sword, King's gift whereon was half a mark of gold, and gave them to Olaf, his son, and therewith his good luck and that of the family, saying he did not speak in this way because he did not know well enough that the luck had already come to him. Olaf took his gifts, and said he would risk how Thorliek would like it. Thorliek liked it very ill, and thought that Hoskuld had behaved in a very underhand way to him. Olaf said, "I shall not give up the gifts, Thorliek, for you agreed to the gift in the face of witnesses; and I shall run the risk to keep it." Bard said he would obey his father's wishes. After that Hoskuld died, and his death was very much grieved for, in the first place by his sons, and next by all his relations and friends. His sons had a worthy cairn made for him; but little money was put into it with him. And when this was over, the brothers began to talk over the matter of preparing an "arvale" (burial feast) after their father, for at that time such was the custom. Olaf said, "It seems to me that we should not be in a hurry about preparing this feast, if it is to be as noble as we should think right; now the autumn is very far worn, and the ingathering of means for it is no longer easy; most people who have to come a long way would find that a hard matter in the autumn days; so that it is certain that many would not come of the men we most should like to see. So I will now make the offer, next summer at the Thing, to bid men to the feast, and I will bear one-third of the cost of the wassail." The brothers agreed to that, and Olaf now went home. Thorliek and Bard now share the goods between them. Bard had the estate and lands, which was what most men held to, as he was the most popular; but Thorliek got for his share more of the chattels. Olaf and Bard got on well together, but Olaf and Thorliek rather snappishly. Now the next winter passed, and summer comes, and time wears on towards the Thing. The sons of Hoskuld got ready to go to the Thing. It was

soon seen clearly enough how Olaf took the lead of the brothers. When they got to the Thing they set up three booths, and make themselves comfortable in a handsome manner.

Chap. XXVII: The Funeral Feast for Hoskuld

It is told how one day when people went to the law rock Olaf stood up and asked for a hearing, and told them first of the death of his father, "and there are now here many men, kinsmen and friends of his. It is the will of my brothers that I ask you to a funeral feast in memory of Hoskuld our father. All you chieftains, for most of the mightier men are such, as were bound by alliances to him, I let it be known that no one of the greater men shall go away giftless. And herewith I bid all the farmers and any who will accept—rich or poor—to a half month's feast at Hoskuldstead ten weeks before the winter." And when Olaf finished his speech good cheer was made thereto, and his bidding was looked upon as a right lordly one. And when Olaf came home to the booth he told his brothers what he had settled to do. The brothers were not much pleased, and thought that this was going in for far too much state. After the Thing the brothers rode home and the summer now wears on. Then the brothers got ready for the feast, and Olaf put forward unstintedly his third part, and the feast was furnished with the best of provisions. Great stores were laid in for this feast, for it was expected many folk would come. And when the time came it is said that most of the chief men came that were asked. There were so many that most men say that there could not be far short of nine hundred (1080). This is the most crowded burial feast that has been in Iceland, second to that which the sons of Hialti gave at the funeral of their father, at which time there were 1440 guests. But this feast was of the bravest in every way, and the brothers got great honour therefrom, Olaf being at the head of the affair throughout. Olaf took even share with his brothers in the gifts; and gifts were bestowed on all the chiefs. When most of the men had gone away Olaf went to have a talk with Thorliek his brother, and said, "So it is, kinsman, as you know, that no love has been lost between us; now I would beg for a better understanding in our brotherhood. I know you did not like when I took the heirlooms my father gave me on his dying day. Now if you think yourself wronged in this, I will do as much for gaining back your whole good-will as to give fostering to your son. For it is said that ever he is the lesser man who fosters another's child." Thorliek took this in good part, and said, as was true, that this was honourably offered. And now Olaf took home Bolli, the son of Thorliek, who at this time was three winters old. They parted now with the utmost affection, and Bolli went home to Herdholt with Olaf. Thorgerd received him well, and Bolli grew up there and was loved no less than their own children.

Chap. XXVIII: The Birth of Kjartan, Olaf's Son, A.D. 978

Olaf and Thorgerd had a son, and the boy was sprinkled with water and a name was given him, Olaf letting him be called Kjartan after Myrkjartan his mother's father. Bolli and Kjartan were much of an age. Olaf and Thorgerd had still more children; three sons were called Steinthor and Halldor and Helgi, and Hoskuld was the name of the youngest of Olaf's sons. The daughters of Olaf and his wife were named Berghthora, Thorgerd, and Thorbjorg. All their children were of goodly promise as they grew up. At that time Holmgang Bersi lived in Saurby at an abode called Tongue. He comes to see Olaf and asked for Halldor his son to foster. Olaf agreed to this and Halldor went home with him, being then one winter old. That summer Bersi fell ill, and lay in bed for a great part of the summer. It is told how one day, when all the men were out haymaking at Tongue and only they two, Bersi and Halldor, were left in the house, Halldor lay in his cradle and the cradle fell over under the boy and he fell out of it on to the floor, and Bersi could not get to him. Then Bersi said this ditty:

Here we both lie
In helpless plight,
Halldor and I,
Have no power left us;
Old age afflicts me,

Youth afflicts you,
You will get better
But I shall get worse.

Later on people came in and picked Halldor up off the floor, and Bersi got better. Halldor was brought up there, and was a tall man and doughty looking. Kjartan, Olaf's son, grew up at home at Herdholt. He was of all men the goodliest of those who have been born in Iceland. He was striking of countenance and fair of feature, he had the finest eyes of any man, and was light of hue. He had a great deal of hair as fair as silk, falling in curls; he was a big man, and strong, taking after his mother's father Egil, or his uncle Thorolf. Kjartan was better proportioned than any man, so that all wondered who saw him. He was better skilled at arms than most men; he was a deft craftsman, and the best swimmer of all men. In all deeds of strength he was far before others, more gentle than any other man, and so engaging that every child loved him; he was light of heart, and free with his money. Olaf loved Kjartan best of all his children. Bolli, his foster-brother, was a great man, he came next to Kjartan in all deeds of strength and prowess; he was strong, and fair of face and courteous, and most warrior-like, and a great dandy. The foster-brothers were very fond of each other. Olaf now remained quietly in his home, and for a good many years.

Chap. XXIX: Olaf's Second Journey to Norway, A.D. 975

It is told how one spring Olaf broke the news to Thorgerd that he wished to go out voyaging—"And I wish you to look after our household and children." Thorgerd said she did not much care about doing that; but Olaf said he would have his way. He bought a ship that stood up in the West, at Vadill. Olaf started during the summer, and brought his ship to Hordaland. There, a short way inland, lived a man whose name was Giermund Roar, a mighty man and wealthy, and a great Viking; he was an evil man to deal with, but had now settled down in quiet at home, and was of the bodyguard of Earl Hakon. The mighty Giermund went down to his ship and soon recognised Olaf, for he had heard him spoken of before. Giermund bade Olaf come and stay with him, with as many of his men as he liked to bring. Olaf accepted his invitation, and went there with seven men. The crew of Olaf went into lodgings about Hordaland. Giermund entertained Olaf well. His house was a lofty one, and there were many men there, and plenty of amusement all the winter. And towards the end of the winter Olaf told Giermund the reason of his voyage, which was that he wished to get for himself some house-timber, and said he set great store by obtaining timber of a choice kind. Giermund said, "Earl Hakon has the best of woods, and I know quite well if you went to see him you would be made welcome to them, for the Earl receives well, men who are not half so well-bred as you, Olaf, when they go to see him." In the spring Olaf got ready to go and find Hakon Earl; and the Earl gave him exceeding good welcome, and bade Olaf stay with him as long as he liked. Olaf told the Earl the reason of his journey, "And I beg this of you, sir, that you give us permission to cut wood for house-building from your forests." The Earl answered, "You are welcome to load your ship with timber, and I will give it you. For I think it no every-day occurrence when such men as you come from Iceland to visit me." At parting the Earl gave him a gold-inlaid axe, and the best of keepsakes it was; and therewith they parted in the greatest friendship. Giermund in the meantime set stewards over his estates secretly, and made up his mind to go to Iceland in the summer in Olaf's ship. He kept this secret from every one. Olaf knew nothing about it till Giermund brought his money to Olaf's ship, and very great wealth it was. Olaf said, "You should not have gone in my ship if I had known of this before-hand, for I think there are those in Iceland for whom it would be better never to have seen you. But since you have come with so much goods, I cannot drive you out like a straying cur." Giermund said, "I shall not return for all your high words, for I mean to be your passenger." Olaf and his got on board, and put out to sea. They had a good voyage and made Broadfirth, and they put out their gangways and landed at Salmon-river-Mouth. Olaf had the wood taken out of his ship, and

the ship put up in the shed his father had made. Olaf then asked Giermund to come and stay with him. That summer Olaf had a fire-hall built at Herdholt, a greater and better than had ever been seen before. Noble legends were painted on its wainscoting and in the roof, and this was so well done that the hall was thought even more beautiful when the hangings were not up. Giermund did not meddle with every-day matters, but was uncouth to most people. He was usually dressed in this way—he wore a scarlet kirtle below and a grey cloak outside, and a bearskin cap on his head, and a sword in his hand. This was a great weapon and good, with a hilt of walrus tooth, with no silver on it; the brand was sharp, and no rust would stay thereon. This sword he called Footbiter, and he never let it out of his hands. Giermund had not been there long before he fell in love with Thured, Olaf's daughter, and proposed to Olaf for her hand; but he gave him a straight refusal. Then Giermund gave some money to Thorgerd with a view to gaining the match. She took the money, for it was offered unstintedly. Then Thorgerd broached the matter to Olaf, and said she thought their daughter could not be better married, "for he is a very brave man, wealthy and high-mettled." Then Olaf answered, "I will not go against you in this any more than in other things, though I would sooner marry Thured to some one else." Thorgerd went away and thought her business had sped well, and now told Giermund the upshot of it. He thanked her for her help and her determination, and Giermund broached the wooing a second time to Olaf, and now won the day easily. After that Giermund and Thured were betrothed, and the wedding was to be held at the end of the winter at Herdholt. The wedding feast was a very crowded one, for the new hall was finished. Ulf Uggason was of the bidden guests, and he had made a poem on Olaf Hoskuldson and of the legends that were painted round the hall, and he gave it forth at the feast. This poem is called the "House Song," and is well made. Olaf rewarded him well for the poem. Olaf gave great gifts to all the chief men who came. Olaf was considered to have gained in renown by this feast.

Chap. XXX: About Giermund and Thured, A.D. 978

Giermund and Thured did not get on very well together, and little love was lost between them on either side. When Giermund had stayed with Olaf three winters he wished to go away, and gave out that Thured and his daughter Groa should remain behind. This little maid was by then a year old, and Giermund would not leave behind any money for them. This the mother and daughter liked very ill, and told Olaf so. Olaf said, "What is the matter now, Thorgerd? is the Eastman now not so bounteous as he was that autumn when he asked for the alliance?" They could get Olaf to do nothing, for he was an easygoing man, and said the girl should remain until she wished to go, or knew how in some way to shift for herself. At parting Olaf gave Giermund the merchant ship all fitted out. Giermund thanked him well therefor, and said it was a noble gift. Then he got on board his ship, and sailed out of the Salmon-river-Mouth by a north-east breeze, which dropped as they came out to the islands. He now lies by Oxe-isle half a month without a fair wind rising for a start. At that time Olaf had to leave home to look after his foreshore drifts. Then Thured, his daughter, called to his house-carles, and bade them come with her. She had the maid Groa with her, and they were a party of ten together. She lets run out into the water a ferry-boat that belonged to Olaf, and Thured bade them sail and row down along Hvamfirth, and when they came out to the islands she bade them put out the cock-boat that was in the ferry. Thured got into the boat with two men, and bade the others take care of the ship she left behind until she returned. She took the little maid in her arms, and bade the men row across the current until they should reach the ship (of Giermund). She took a gimlet out of the boat's locker, and gave it to one of her companions, and bade him go to the cockle-boat belonging to the merchant ship and bore a hole in it so as to disable it if they needed it in a hurry. Then she had herself put ashore with the little maid still in her arms. This was at the hour of sunrise. She went across the gangway into the ship, where all men were asleep. She went to the hammock where Giermund slept. His sword Footbiter

hung on a peg pole. Thured now sets the little maid in the hammock, and snatched off Footbiter and took it with her. Then she left the ship and rejoined her companions. Now the little maid began to cry, and with that Giermund woke up and recognised the child, and thought he knew who must be at the bottom of this. He springs up wanting to seize his sword, and misses it, as was to be expected, and then went to the gunwale, and saw that they were rowing away from the ship. Giermund called to his men, and bade them leap into the cockle-boat and row after them. They did so, but when they got a little way they found how the coal-blue sea poured into them, so they went back to the ship. Then Giermund called Thured and bade her come back and give him his sword Footbiter, "and take your little maid, and with her as much money as you like." Thured answered, "Would you rather than not have the sword back?" Giermund answered, "I would give a great deal of money before I should care to let my sword go." Thured answered, "Then you shall never have it again, for you have in many ways behaved cowardly towards me, and here we shall part for good." Then Giermund said, "Little luck will you get with the sword." Thured said she would take the risk of that. "Then I lay thereon this spell," said Giermund, "That this sword shall do to death the man in your family in who would be the greatest loss, and in a manner most ill-fated." After that Thured went home to Herdholt. Olaf had then come home, and showed his displeasure at her deed, yet all was quiet. Thured gave Bolli, her cousin, the sword Footbiter, for she loved him in no way less than her brothers. Bolli bore that sword for a long time after. After this Giermund got a favourable wind, and sailed out to sea, and came to Norway in the autumn. They sailed one night on to some hidden rocks before Stade, and then Giermund and all his crew perished. And that is the end of all there is to tell about Giermund.

Chap. XXXI: Thured's Second Marriage, A.D. 980

Olaf Hoskuldson now stayed at home in much honour, as has been told before. There was a man named Gudmund, who was the son of Solmund, and lived at Asbjornness north in Willowdale. He wooed Thured, and got her and a great deal of wealth with her. Thured was a wise woman, high-tempered and most stirring. Their sons were called Hall and Bard and Stein and Steingrim. Gudrun and Olof were their daughters. Thorbjorg, Olaf's daughter, was of women the most beautiful and stout of build. She was called Thorbjorg the Stout, and was married west in Waterfirth to Asgier, the son of Knott. He was a noble man. Their son was Kjartan, father of Thorvald, the father of Thord, the father of Snorri, the father of Thorvald, from whom is sprung the Waterfirth race. Afterwards, Vermund, the son of Thorgrim, had Thorbjorg for wife. Their daughter was Thorfinna, whom Thorstein Kuggason had for wife. Bergthora, Olaf's daughter, was married west in Deepfirth to Thorhall the Priest. Their son was Kjartan, father of Smith-Sturla, the foster son of Thord Gilson. Olaf Peacock had many costly cattle. He had one very good ox named Harri; it was dapple-grey of coat, and bigger than any other of his cattle. It had four horns, two great and fair ones, the third stood straight up, and a fourth stood out of its forehead, stretching down below its eyes. It was with this that he opened the ice in winter to get water. He scraped snow away to get at pasture like a horse. One very hard winter he went from Herdholt into the Broadfirth-Dales to a place that is now called Harristead. There he roamed through the winter with sixteen other cattle, and got grazing for them all. In the spring he returned to the home pastures, to the place now called Harris'-Lair in Herdholt land. When Harri was eighteen winters old his ice-breaking horn fell off, and that same autumn Olaf had him killed. The next night Olaf dreamed that a woman came to him, and she was great and wrathful to look at. She spoke and said, "Are you asleep?" He said he was awake. The woman said, "You are asleep, though it comes to the same thing as if you were awake. You have had my son slain, and let him come to my hand in a shapeless plight, and for this deed you shall see your son, blood-stained all over through my doing, and him I shall choose thereto whom I know you would like to lose least of all." After that she disappeared, and Olaf woke up and still thought he

saw the features of the woman. Olaf took the dream very much to heart, and told it to his friends, but no one could read it to his liking. He thought those spoke best about this matter who said that what had appeared to him was only a dream or fancy.

Chap. XXXII: Of Osvif Helgeson

Osvif was the name of a man. He was the son of Helgi, who was the son of Ottar, the son of Bjorn the Eastman, who was the son of Ketill Flatnose, the son of Bjorn Buna. The mother of Osvif was named Nidbiorg. Her mother was Kadlin, the daughter of Ganging-Hrolf, the son of Ox-Thorir, who was a most renowned "Hersir" (war-lord) east in Wick. Why he was so called, was that he owned three islands with eighty oxen on each. He gave one island and its oxen to Hakon the King, and his gift was much talked about. Osvif was a great sage. He lived at Laugar in Salingsdale. The homestead of Laugar stands on the northern side of Salingsdale-river, over against Tongue. The name of his wife was Thordis, daughter of Thjodolf the Low. Ospak was the name of one of their sons. Another was named Helgi, and a third Vandrad, and a fourth Jorrad, and a fifth Thorolf. They were all doughty men for fighting. Gudrun was the name of their daughter. She was the goodliest of women who grew up in Iceland, both as to looks and wits. Gudrun was such a woman of state that at that time whatever other women wore in the way of finery of dress was looked upon as children's gewgaws beside hers. She was the most cunning and the fairest spoken of all women, and an open-handed woman withal. There was a woman living with Osvif who was named Thorhalla, and was called the Chatterer. She was some sort of relation to Osvif. She had two sons, one named Odd and the other Stein. They were muscular men, and in a great measure the hardest toilers for Osvif's household. They were talkative like their mother, but ill liked by people; yet were upheld greatly by the sons of Osvif. At Tongue there lived a man named Thorarin, son of Thorir Sæling (the Voluptuous). He was a well-off yeoman, a big man and strong. He had very good land, but less of live stock. Osvif wished to buy some of his land from him, for he had lack of land but a multitude of live stock. So this then came about that Osvif bought of the land of Thorarin all the tract from Gnupaskard along both sides of the valley to Stack-gill, and very good and fattening land it was. He had on it an out-dairy. Osvif had at all times a great many servants, and his way of living was most noble. West in Saurby is a place called Hol, there lived three kinsmen-in-law—Thorkell the Whelp and Knut, who were brothers, they were very well-born men, and their brother-in-law, who shared their household with them, who was named Thord. He was, after his mother, called Ingun's-son. The father of Thord was Glum Gierison. Thord was a handsome and valiant man, well knit, and a great man of law-suits. Thord had for wife the sister of Thorkell and Knut, who was called Aud, neither a goodly nor a bucksome woman. Thord loved her little, as he had chiefly married her for her money, for there a great wealth was stored together, and the household flourished from the time that Thord came to have hand in it with them.

Chap. XXXIII: Of Gest Oddleifson and Gudrun's Dreams

Gest Oddleifson lived west at Bardastrand, at Hagi. He was a great chieftain and a sage; was fore-seeing in many things and in good friendship with all the great men, and many came to him for counsel. He rode every summer to the Thing, and always would put up at Hol. One time it so happened once more that Gest rode to the Thing and was a guest at Hol. He got ready to leave early in the morning, for the journey was a long one and he meant to get to Thickshaw in the evening to Armod, his brother-in-law's, who had for wife Thorunn, a sister of Gest's. Their sons were Ornolf and Haldor. Gest rode all that day from Saurby and came to the Sælingsdale spring, and tarried there for a while. Gudrun came to the spring and greeted her relative, Gest, warmly. Gest gave her a good welcome, and they began to talk together, both being wise and of ready speech. And as the day was wearing on, Gudrun said, "I wish, cousin, you would ride home with us with all your followers, for it is the wish of my father, though he gave me the

honour of bearing the message, and told me to say that he would wish you to come and stay with us every time you rode to or from the west." Gest received the message well, and thought it a very manly offer, but said he must ride on now as he had purposed. Gudrun said, "I have dreamt many dreams this winter; but four of the dreams do trouble my mind much, and no man has been able to explain them as I like, and yet I ask not for any favourable interpretation of them." Gest said, "Tell me your dreams, it may be that I can make something of them." Gudrun said, "I thought I stood out of doors by a certain brook, and I had a crooked coif on my head, and I thought it misfitted me, and I wished to alter the coif, and many people told me I should not do so, but I did not listen to them, and I tore the hood from my head, and cast it into the brook, and that was the end of that dream." Then Gudrun said again, "This is the next dream. I thought I stood near some water, and I thought there was a silver ring on my arm. I thought it was my own, and that it fitted me exceeding well. I thought it was a most precious thing, and long I wished to keep it. But when I was least aware of it, the ring slipped off my arm and into the water, and nothing more did I see of it afterwards. I felt this loss much more than it was likely I should ever feel the loss of a mere keepsake. Then I awoke." Gest answered this alone: "No lesser a dream is that one." Gudrun still spoke: "This is the third dream, I thought I had a gold ring on my hand, which I thought belonged to me, and I thought my loss was now made good again. And the thought entered my mind that I would keep this ring longer than the first; but it did not seem to me that this keepsake suited me better than the former at anything like the rate that gold is more precious than silver. Then I thought I fell, and tried to steady myself with my hand, but then the gold ring struck on a certain stone and broke in two, and the two pieces bled. What I had to bear after this felt more like grief than regret for a loss. And it struck me now that there must have been some flaw in the ring, and when I looked at the pieces I thought I saw sundry more flaws in them; yet I had a feeling that if I had taken better care of it, it might still have been whole; and this dream was no longer." Gest said, "The dreams are not waning." Then said Gudrun, "This is my fourth dream. I thought I had a helm of gold upon my head, set with many precious stones. And I thought this precious thing belonged to me, but what I chiefly found fault with was that it was rather too heavy, and I could scarcely bear it, so that I carried my head on one side; yet I did not blame the helm for this, nor had I any mind to part with it. Yet the helm tumbled from my head out into Hvammfirth, and after that I awoke. Now I have told you all my dreams." Gest answered, "I clearly see what these dreams betoken; but you will find my unravelling savouring much of sameness, for I must read them all nearly in the same way. You will have four husbands, and it misdoubts me when you are married to the first it will be no love match. Inasmuch as you thought you had a great coif on your head and thought it ill-fitting, that shows you will love him but little. And whereas you took it off your head and cast it into the water, that shows that you will leave him. For that, men say, is 'cast on to the sea,' when a man loses what is his own, and gets nothing in return for it." And still Gest spake: "Your second dream was that you thought you had a silver ring on your arm, and that shows you will marry a nobleman whom you will love much, but enjoy him for but a short time, and I should not wonder if you lose him by drowning. That is all I have to tell of that dream. And in the third dream you thought you had a gold ring on your hand; that shows you will have a third husband; he will not excel the former at the rate that you deemed this metal more rare and precious than silver; but my mind forebodes me that by that time a change of faith will have come about, and your husband will have taken the faith which we are minded to think is the more exalted. And whereas you thought the ring broke in two through some misheer of yours, and blood came from the two pieces, that shows that this husband of yours will be slain, and then you will think you see for the first time clearly all the flaws of that match." Still Gest went on to say: "This is your fourth dream, that you thought you had a helm on your head, of gold set with precious stones, and that it was a heavy one for you to bear. This shows you will have a fourth husband who will be the greatest nobleman (of the four), and will bear somewhat a helm of awe

over you. And whereas you thought it tumbled out into Hvammfirth, it shows that that same firth will be in his way on the last day of his life. And now I go no further with this dream." Gudrun sat with her cheeks blood red whilst the dreams were unravelled, but said not a word till Gest came to the end of his speech. Then said Gudrun, "You would have fairer prophecies in this matter if my delivery of it into your hands had warranted; have my thanks all the same for unravelling the dreams. But it is a fearful thing to think of, if all this is to come to pass as you say." Gudrun then begged Gest would stay there the day out, and said that he and Osvif would have many wise things to say between them. He answered, "I must ride on now as I have made up my mind. But bring your father my greeting and tell him also these my words, that the day will come when there will be a shorter distance between Osvif's and my dwellings, and then we may talk at ease, if then we are allowed to converse together." Then Gudrun went home and Gest rode away. Gest met a servant of Olaf's by the home-field fence, who invited Gest to Herdholt, at the bidding of Olaf. Gest said he would go and see Olaf during the day, but would stay (the night) at Thickshaw. The servant returned home and told Olaf so. Olaf had his horse brought and rode with several men out to meet Gest. He and Gest met up at Lea-river. Olaf greeted him well and asked him in with all his followers. Gest thanked him for the invitation, and said he would ride up to the homestead and have a look and see how he was housed, but he must stay with Armod. Gest tarried but a little while, yet he saw over the homestead and admired it and said, "No money has been spared for this place." Olaf rode away with Gest to the Salmon-river. The foster-brothers had been swimming there during the day, and at this sport the sons of Olaf mostly took the lead. There were many other young men from the other houses swimming too. Kjartan and Bolli leapt out of the water as the company rode down and were nearly dressed when Olaf and Gest came up to them. Gest looked at these young men for a while, and told Olaf where Kjartan was sitting as well as Bolli, and then Gest pointed his spear shaft to each one of Olaf's sons and named by name all of them that were there. But there were many other handsome young men there who had just left off swimming and sat on the river-bank with Kjartan and Bolli. Gest said he did not discover the family features of Olaf in any of these young men. Then said Olaf: "Never is there too much said about your wits, Gest, knowing, as you do, men you have never seen before. Now I wish you to tell me which of those young men will be the mightiest man." Gest replied, "That will fall out much in keeping with your own love, for Kjartan will be the most highly accounted of so long as he lives." Then Gest smote his horse and rode away. A little while after Thord the Low rode up to his side, and said, "What has now come to pass, father, that you are shedding tears?" Gest answered, "It is needless to tell it, yet I am loath to keep silence on matters that will happen in your own days. To me it will not come unawares if Bolli one day should *have* at his feet the head of Kjartan slain, and should by the deed bring about his own death, and this is an ill thing to know of such sterling men." Then they rode on to the Thing, and it was an uneventful meeting.

Chap. XXXIV: Gudrun's First Marriage, A.D. 989

Thorvald was the name of a man, son of Haldor Garpdale's Priest. He lived at Garpsdale in Gilsfirth, a wealthy man, but not much of a hero. At the Thing he wooed Gudrun, Osvif's daughter, when she was fifteen years old. The matter was not taken up in a very adverse manner, yet Osvif said that against the match it would tell, that he and Gudrun were not of equal standing. Thorvald spoke gently, and said he was wooing a wife, not money. After that Gudrun was betrothed to Thorvald, and Osvif settled alone the marriage contract, whereby it was provided that Gudrun should alone manage their money affairs straightway when they came into one bed, and be entitled to one-half thereof as her own, whether their married life were long or short. He should also buy her jewels, so that no woman of equal wealth should have better to show. Yet he should retain his farm-stock unimpaired by such purchases. And now men ride home from the Thing. Gudrun was not asked

about it, and took it much to heart; yet things went on quietly. The wedding was at Garpsdale, in Twinmonth (latter part of August to the latter part of September). Gudrun loved Thorvald but little, and was extravagant in buying finery. There was no jewel so costly in all the West-firths that Gudrun did not deem it fitting that it should be hers, and rewarded Thorvald with anger if he did not buy it for her, however dear it might be. Thord, Ingun's son, made himself very friendly with Thorvald and Gudrun, and stayed with them for long times together, and there was much talk of the love of Thord and Gudrun for each other. Once upon a time Gudrun bade Thorvald buy a gift for her, and Thorvald said she showed no moderation in her demands, and gave her a box on the ear. Then said Gudrun, "Now you have given me that which we women set great store by having to perfection—a fine colour in the cheeks—and thereby have also taught me how to leave off importuning you." That same evening Thord came there. Gudrun told him about the shameful mishandling, and asked him how she should repay it. Thord smiled, and said: "I know a very good counsel for this: make him a shirt with such a large neck-hole that you may have a good excuse for separating from him, because he has a low neck like a woman." Gudrun said nothing against this, and they dropped their talk. That same spring Gudrun separated herself from Thorvald, and she went home to Laugar. After that the money was divided between Gudrun and Thorvald, and she had half of all the wealth, which now was even greater than before (her marriage). They had lived two winters together. That same spring Ingun sold her land in Crookfirth, the estate which was afterwards called Ingunstead, and went west to Skalmness. Glum Gierison had formerly had her for wife, as has been before written. At that time Hallstein the Priest lived at Hallsteinness, on the west side of Codfirth. He was a mighty man, but middling well off as regards friends.

Chap. XXXV: Gudrun's Second Marriage, A.D. 991

Kotkell was the name of a man who had only come to Iceland a short time before, Grima was the name of his wife. Their sons were Hallbjorn Whetstone-eye, and Stigandi. These people were natives of Sodor. They were all wizards and the greatest of enchanters. Hallstein Godi took them in and settled them down at Urdir in Skalm-firth, and their dwelling there was none of the best liked. That summer Gest went to the Thing and went in a ship to Saurby as he was wont. He stayed as guest at Hol in Saurby. The brothers-in-law found him in horses as was their former wont. Thord Ingunson was amongst the followers of Gest on this journey and came to Laugar in Salingsdale. Gudrun Osvif's daughter rode to the Thing, and Thord Ingunson rode with her. It happened one day as they were riding over Blueshaw-heath, the weather being fine, that Gudrun said, "Is it true, Thord, that your wife Aud always goes about in breeches with gores in the seat, winding swathings round her legs almost to her feet?" Thord said, "He had not noticed that." "Well, then, there must be but little in the tale," said Gudrun, "if you have not found it out, but for what then is she called Breeches Aud?" Thord said, "I think she has been called so for but a short time." Gudrun answered, "What is of more moment to her is that she bear the name for a long time hereafter." After that people arrived at the Thing and no tidings befell there. Thord spent much time in Gest's booth and always talked to Gudrun. One day Thord Ingunson asked Gudrun what the penalty was for a woman who went about always in breeches like men. Gudrun replied, "She deserves the same penalty as a man who is dressed in a shirt with so low a neck that his naked breast be seen—separation in either case." Then Thord said, "Would you advise me to proclaim my separation from Aud here at the Thing or in the country by the counsel of many men? For I have to deal with high-tempered men who will count themselves as ill-treated in this affair." Gudrun answered after a while, "For evening waits the idler's suit." Then Thord sprang up and went to the law rock and named to him witnesses, declared his separation from Aud, and gave as his reason that she made for herself gored breeches like a man. Aud's brothers disliked this very much, but things kept quiet. Then Thord rode away from the Thing with the sons

of Osvif. When Aud heard these tidings, she said, "Good! Well, that I know that I am left thus single." Then Thord rode, to divide the money, west into Saurby and twelve men with him, and it all went off easily, for Thord made no difficulties as to how the money was divided. Thord drove from the west unto Laugar a great deal of live stock. After that he wooed Gudrun and that matter was easily settled; Osvif and Gudrun said nothing against it. The wedding was to take place in the tenth week of the summer, and that was a right noble feast. Thord and Gudrun lived happily together. What alone withheld Thorkell Whelp and Knut from setting afoot a lawsuit against Thord Ingunson was, that they got no backing up to that end. The next summer the men of Hol had an out-dairy business in Hvammdale, and Aud stayed at the dairy. The men of Laugar had their out-dairy in Lambdale, which cuts westward into the mountains off Salingsdale. Aud asked the man who looked after the sheep how often he met the shepherd from Laugar. He said nearly always as was likely since there was only a neck of land between the two dairies. Then said Aud, "You shall meet the shepherd from Laugar to-day, and you can tell me who there are staying at the winter-dwelling or who at the dairy, and speak in a friendly way of Thord as it behoves you to do." The boy promised to do as she told him. And in the evening when the shepherd came home Aud asked what tidings he brought. The shepherd answered, "I have heard tidings which you will think good, that now there is a broad bedroom-floor between the beds of Thord and Gudrun, for she is at the dairy and he is swinging at the rear of the hall, he and Osvif being two together alone at the winter-dwelling." "You have espied well," said she, "and see to have saddled two horses at the time when people are going to bed." The shepherd did as she bade him. A little before sunset Aud mounted, and was now indeed in breeches. The shepherd rode the other horse and could hardly keep up with her, so hard did she push on riding. She rode south over Salingsdale-heath and never stopped before she got to the home-field fence at Laugar. Then she dismounted, and bade the shepherd look after the horses whilst she went to the house. Aud went to the door and found it open, and she went into the fire-hall to the locked-bed in the wall. Thord lay asleep, the door had fallen to, but the bolt was not on, so she walked into the bedroom. Thord lay asleep on his back. Then Aud woke Thord, and he turned on his side when he saw a man had come in. Then she drew a sword and thrust it at Thord and gave him great wounds, the sword striking his right arm and wounding him on both nipples. So hard did she follow up the stroke that the sword stuck in the bolster. Then Aud went away and to her horse and leapt on to its back, and thereupon rode home. Thord tried to spring up when he got the blow, but could not, because of his loss of blood. Then Osvif awoke and asked what had happened, and Thord told that he had been wounded somewhat. Osvif asked if he knew who had done the deed on him, and got up and bound up his wounds. Thord said he was minded to think that Aud had done it. Osvif offered to ride after her, and said she must have gone on this errand with few men, and her penalty was ready-made for her. Thord said that should not be done at all, for she had only done what she ought to have done. Aud got home at sunrise, and her brothers asked her where she had been to. Aud said she had been to Laugar, and told them what tidings had befallen in her journey. They were pleased at this, and said that too little was likely to have been done by her. Thord lay wounded a long time. His chest wound healed well, but his arm grew no better for work than before (*i.e.* when it first was wounded). All was now quiet that winter. But in the following spring Ingun, Thord's mother, came west from Skalmness. Thord greeted her warmly: she said she wished to place herself under his protection, and said that Kotkell and his wife and sons were giving her much trouble by stealing her goods, and through witchcraft, but had a strong support in Hallstein the Priest. Thord took this matter up swiftly, and said he should have the right of these thieves no matter how it might displease Hallstein. He got speedily ready for the journey with ten men, and Ingun went west with him. He got a ferry-boat out of Tjaldness. Then they went to Skalmness. Thord had put on board ship all the chattels his mother owned there, and the cattle were to be driven round the heads of the firths. There were twelve of them altogether in the

boat, with Ingun and another woman. Thord and ten men went to Kotkell's place. The sons of Kotkell were not at home. He then summoned Kotkell and Grima and their sons for theft and witchcraft, and claimed outlawry as award. He laid the case to the Althing, and then returned to his ship. Hallbjorn and Stigandi came home when Thord had got out but a little way from land, and Kotkell told his sons what had happened there. The brothers were furious at that, and said that hitherto people had taken care not to show them in so barefaced a manner such open enmity. Then Kotkell had a great spell-working scaffold made, and they all went up on to it, and they sang hard twisted songs that were enchantments. And presently a great tempest arose. Thord, Ingun's son, and his companions, continued out at sea as he was, soon knew that the storm was raised against him. Now the ship is driven west beyond Skalmness, and Thord showed great courage with seamanship. The men who were on land saw how he threw overboard all that made up the boat's lading, saving the men; and the people who were on land expected Thord would come to shore, for they had passed the place that was the rockiest; but next there arose a breaker on a rock a little way from the shore that no man had ever known to break sea before, and smote the ship so that forthwith up turned keel uppermost. There Thord and all his followers were drowned, and the ship was broken to pieces, and the keel was washed up at a place now called Keelisle. Thord's shield was washed up on an island that has since been called Shield-isle. Thord's body and the bodies of his followers were all washed ashore, and a great howe was raised over their corpses at the place now called Howesness.

Chap. XXXVI: About Kotkell and Grima

These tidings spread far and wide, and were very ill-spoken of; they were accounted of as men of doomed lives, who wrought such witchcraft as that which Kotkell and his had now shown. Gudrun took the death of Thord sorely to heart, for she was now a woman not hale, and coming close to her time. After that Gudrun gave birth to a boy, who was sprinkled with water and called Thord. At that time Snorri the Priest lived at Holyfell; he was a kinsman and a friend of Osvif's, and Gudrun and her people trusted him very much. Snorri went thither (to Laugar), being asked to a feast there. Then Gudrun told her trouble to Snorri, and he said he would back up their case when it seemed good to him, but offered to Gudrun to foster her child to comfort her. This Gudrun agreed to, and said she would rely on his foresight. This Thord was surnamed the Cat, and was father of the poet Stúf. After that Gest Oddleifson went to see Hallstein, and gave him choice of two things, either that he should send away these wizards or he said that he would kill them, "and yet it comes too late." Hallstein made his choice at once, and bade them rather be off, and put up nowhere west of Daleheath, adding that it was more justly they ought to be slain. After that Kotkell and his went away with no other goods than four stud-horses. The stallion was black; he was both great and fair and very strong, and tried in horse-fighting. Nothing is told of their journey till they came to Combeness, to Thorliek, Hoskuld's son. He asked to buy the horses from them, for he said that they were exceeding fine beasts. Kotkell replied, "I'll give you the choice. Take you the horses and give me some place to dwell in here in your neighbourhood." Thorliek said, "Will the horses not be rather dear, then, for I have heard tell you are thought rather guilty in this countryside?" Kotkell answers, "In this you are hinting at the men of Laugar." Thorliek said that was true. Then Kotkell said, "Matters point quite another way, as concerning our guilt towards Gudrun and her brothers, than you have been told; people have overwhelmed us with slander for no cause at all. Take the horses, nor let these matters stand in the way. Such tales alone are told of you, moreover, as would show that we shall not be easily tripped up by the folk of this countryside, if we have your help to fall back upon." Thorliek now changed his mind in this matter, for the horses seemed fair to him, and Kotkell pleaded his case cunningly; so Thorliek took the horses, and gave them a dwelling at Ludolfstead in Salmon-river-Dale, and stocked them with farming beasts. This the men of Laugar heard, and the sons of Osvif wished to fall forthwith on Kotkell and his sons; but

Osvis said, "Let us take now the counsel of Priest Snorri, and leave this business to others, for short time will pass before the neighbours of Kotkell will have brand new cases against him and his, and Thorliek, as is most fitting, will abide the greatest hurt from them. In a short while many will become his enemies from whom heretofore he has only had good will. But I shall not stop you from doing whatever hurt you please to Kotkell and his, if other men do not come forward to drive them out of the countryside or to take their lives, by the time that three winters have worn away." Gudrun and her brothers said it should be as he said. Kotkell and his did not do much in working for their livelihood, but that winter they were in no need to buy hay or food; but an unbefriended neighbourhood was theirs, though men did not see their way to disturbing their dwelling because of Thorliek.

Chap. XXXVII: About Hrut and Eldgrim, A.D. 995

One summer at the Thing, as Thorliek was sitting in his booth, a very big man walked into the booth. He greeted Thorliek, who took well the greeting of this man and asked his name and whence he was. He said he was called Eldgrim, and lived in Burgfirth at a place called Eldgrimstead—but that abode lies in the valley which cuts westward into the mountains between Mull and Pig-tongue, and is now called Grimsdale. Thorliek said, "I have heard you spoken of as being no small man." Eldgrim said, "My errand here is that I want to buy from you the stud-horses, those valuable ones that Kotkell gave you last summer." Thorliek answered, "The horses are not for sale." Eldgrim said, "I will offer you equally many stud-horses for them and some other things thrown in, and many would say that I offer you twice as much as the horses are worth." Thorliek said, "I am no haggler, but these horses you will never have, not even though you offer three times their worth." Eldgrim said, "I take it to be no lie that you are proud and self-willed, and I should, indeed, like to see you getting a somewhat less handsome price for them than I have now offered you, and that you should have to let the horses go none the less." Thorliek got angered at these words, and said, "You need, Eldgrim, to come to closer quarters if you mean to frighten out me the horses." Eldgrim said, "You think it unlikely that you will be beaten by me, but this summer I shall go and see the horses, and we will see which of us will own them after that." Thorliek said, "Do as you like, but bring up no odds against me." Then they dropped their talk. The man who heard this said that for this sort of dealing together here were two just fitting matches for each other. After that people went home from the Thing, and nothing happened to tell tidings of. It happened one morning early that a man looked out at Hrutstead at Goodman Hrut's, Herjolf's son's, and when he came in Hrut asked what news he brought. He said he had no other tidings to tell save that he saw a man riding from beyond Vadlar towards where Thorliek's horses were, and that the man got off his horse and took the horses. Hrut asked where the horses were then, and the house-carle replied, "Oh, they have stuck well to their pasture, for they stood as usual in your meadows down below the fence-wall." Hrut replied, "Verily, Thorliek, my kinsman, is not particular as to where he grazes his beasts; and I still think it more likely that it is not by his order that the horses are driven away." Then Hrut sprang up in his shirt and linen breeches, and cast over him a grey cloak and took in his hand his gold inlaid halberd that King Harald had given him. He went out quickly and saw where a man was riding after horses down below the wall. Hrut went to meet him, and saw that it was Eldgrim driving the horses. Hrut greeted him, and Eldgrim returned his greeting, but rather slowly. Hrut asked him why he was driving the horses. Eldgrim replied, "I will not hide it from you, though I know what kinship there is between you and Thorliek; but I tell you I have come after these horses, meaning that he shall never have them again. I have also kept what I promised him at the Thing, that I have not gone after the horses with any great company." Hrut said, "That is no deed of fame to you to take away the horses while Thorliek lies in his bed and sleeps; you would keep best what you agreed upon if you go and meet himself before you drive the horses out of the countryside." Eldgrim said, "Go and warn Thorliek if you wish,

for you may see I have prepared myself in such a manner as that I should like it well if we were to meet together, I and Thorliek," and therewith he brandished the barbed spear he had in his hand. He had also a helmet on his head, and a sword girded on his side, and a shield on his flank, and had on a chain coat. Hrut said, "I think I must seek for something else than to go to Combeness for I am heavy of foot; but I mean not to allow Thorliek to be robbed if I have means thereto, no matter how little love there may go with our kinship." Eldgrim said, "And do you mean to take the horses away from me?" Hrut said, "I will give you other stud-horses if you will let these alone, though they may not be quite so good as these are." Eldgrim said, "You speak most kindly, Hrut, but since I have got hold of Thorliek's horses you will not pluck them out of my hands either by bribes or threats." Hrut replied, "Then I think you are making for both of us the choice that answers the worst." Eldgrim now wanted to part, and gave the whip to his horse, and when Hrut saw that, he raised up his halberd and struck Eldgrim through the back between the shoulders so that the coat of mail was torn open and the halberd flew out through the chest, and Eldgrim fell dead off his horse, as was only natural. After that Hrut covered up his body at the place called Eldgrim's-holt south of Combeness. Then Hrut rode over to Combeness and told Thorliek the tidings. Thorliek burst into a rage, and thought a great shame had been done him by this deed, while Hrut thought he had shown him great friendship thereby. Thorliek said that not only had he done this for an evil purpose, but that, moreover, no good would come in return for it. Hrut said that Thorliek must do what pleased him, and so they parted in no loving kindness. Hrut was eighty years old when he killed Eldgrim, and he was considered by that deed to have added much to his fame. Thorliek thought that Hrut was none the worthier of any good from him for being more renowned for this deed, for he held it was perfectly clear he would have himself have got the better of Eldgrim if they had had a trial of arms between them, seeing how little was needed to trip Eldgrim up. Thorliek now went to see his tenants Kotkell and Grima, and bade them do something to the shame of Hrut. They took this up gladly, and said they were quite ready to do so. Thorliek now went home. A little later they, Kotkell and Grima and their sons, started on a journey from home, and that was by night. They went to Hrut's dwelling, and made great incantations there, and when the spell-working began, those within were at a loss to make out what could be the reason of it; but sweet indeed was that singing they heard. Hrut alone knew what these goings-on meant, and bade no man look out that night, "and let every one who may keep awake, and no harm will come to us if that counsel is followed." But all the people fell asleep. Hrut watched longest, and at last he too slept. Kari was the name of a son of Hrut, and he was then twelve winters old. He was the most promising of all Hrut's sons, and Hrut loved him much. Kari hardly slept at all, for to him the play was made; he did not sleep very soundly, and at last he got up and looked out, and walked in the direction of the enchantment, and fell down dead at once. Hrut awoke in the morning, as also did his household, and missed his son, who was found dead a short way from the door. This Hrut felt as the greatest bereavement, and had a cairn raised over Kari. Then he rode to Olaf Hoskuldson and told him the tidings of what had happened there. Olaf was madly wroth at this, and said it showed great lack of forethought that they had allowed such scoundrels as Kotkell and his family to live so near to him, and said that Thorliek had shaped for himself an evil lot by dealing as he had done with Hrut, but added that more must have been done than Thorliek had ever could have wished. Olaf said too that forthwith Kotkell and his wife and sons must be slain, "late though it is now." Olaf and Hrut set out with fifteen men. But when Kotkell and his family saw the company of men riding up to their dwelling, they took to their heels up to the mountain. There Hallbjorn Whetstone-eye was caught and a bag was drawn over his head, and while some men were left to guard him others went in pursuit of Kotkell, Grima, and Stigandi up on the mountain. Kotkell and Grima were laid hands on on the neck of land between Hawkdale and Salmon-river-Dale, and were stoned to death and a heap of stones thrown up over them, and the remains are still to be seen, being called Scratch-beacon. Stigandi took to his heels south over the neck towards Hawkdale, and there

got out of their sight. Hrut and his sons went down to the sea with Hallbjorn, and put out a boat and rowed out from land with him, and they took the bag off his head and tied a stone round his neck. Hallbjorn set gloating glances on the land, and the manner of his look was nowise of the goodliest. Then Hallbjorn said, "It was no day of bliss when we, kinsfolk, came to this Combeness and met with Thorliæk. And this spell I utter," says he, "that Thorliæk shall from henceforth have but few happy days, and that all who fill his place have a troublous life there." And this spell, men deem, has taken great effect. After that they drowned him, and rowed back to land.

A little while afterwards Hrut went to find Olaf his kinsman, and told him that he would not leave matters with Thorliæk as they stood, and bade him furnish him with men to go and make a house-raid on Thorliæk. Olaf replied, "It is not right that you two kinsmen should be laying hands on each other; on Thorliæk's behalf this has turned out a matter of most evil luck. I would sooner try and bring about peace between you, and you have often waited well and long for your good turn." Hrut said, "It is no good casting about for this; the sores between us two will never heal up; and I should like that from henceforth we should not both live in Salmon-river-Dale." Olaf replied, "It will not be easy for you to go further against Thorliæk than I am willing to allow; but if you do it, it is not unlikely that dale and hill will meet." Hrut thought he now saw things stuck hard and fast before him; so he went home mightily ill pleased; but all was quiet or was called so. And for that year men kept quiet at home.

Chap. XXXVIII: The Death of Stigandi. Thorliæk leaves Iceland

Now, to tell of Stigandi, he became an outlaw and an evil to deal with. Thord was the name of a man who lived at Hundidale; he was a rich man, but had no manly greatness. A startling thing happened that summer in Hundidale, in that the milking stock did not yield much milk, but a woman looked after the beast there. At last people found out that she grew wealthy in precious things, and that she would disappear long and often, and no one knew where she was. Thord brought pressure to bear on her for confession, and when she got frightened she said a man was wont to come and meet her, "a big one," she said, "and in my eyes very handsome." Thord then asked how soon the man would come again to meet her, and she said she thought it would be soon. After that Thord went to see Olaf, and told him that Stigandi must be about, not far away from there, and bade him bestir himself with his men and catch him. Olaf got ready at once and came to Hundidale, and the bonds-woman was fetched for Olaf to have talk of her. Olaf asked her where the lair of Stigandi was. She said she did not know. Olaf offered to pay her money if she would bring Stigandi within reach of him and his men; and on this they came to a bargain together. The next day she went out to herd her cattle, and Stigandi comes that day to meet her. She greeted him well, and offers to look through (the hair of) his head. He laid his head down on her knee, and soon went to sleep. Then she slunk away from under his head, and went to meet Olaf and his men, and told them what had happened. Then they went towards Stigandi, and took counsel between them as to how it should not fare with him as his brother, that he should cast his glance on many things from which evil would befall them. They take now a bag, and draw it over his head. Stigandi woke at that, and made no struggle, for now there were many men to one. The sack had a slit in it, and Stigandi could see out through it the slope on the other side; there the lay of the land was fair, and it was covered with thick grass. But suddenly something like a whirlwind came on, and turned the sward topsy-turvy, so that the grass never grew there again. It is now called Brenna. Then they stoned Stigandi to death, and there he was buried under a heap of stones. Olaf kept his word to the bonds-woman, and gave her her freedom, and she went home to Herdholt. Hallbjorn Whetstone-eye was washed up by the surf a short time after he was drowned. It was called Knorstone where he was put in the earth, and his ghost walked about there a great deal. There was a man named Thorkell Skull who lived at Thickshaw on his father's inheritance. He was a man of very dauntless

heart and mighty of muscle. One evening a cow was missing at Thickshaw, and Thorkell and his house-carle went to look for it. It was after sunset, but was bright moonlight. Thorkell said they must separate in their search, and when Thorkell was alone he thought he saw the cow on a hill-rise in front of him, but when he came up to it he saw it was Whetstone-eye and no cow. They fell upon each in mighty strength. Hallbjorn kept on the defensive, and when Thorkell least expected it he crept down into the earth out of his hands. After that Thorkell went home. The house-carle had come home already, and had found the cow. No more harm befell ever again from Hallbjorn.

Thorbjorn Skrup was dead by then, and so was Melkorka, and they both lie in a cairn in Salmon-river-Dale. Lambi, their son, kept house there after them. He was very warrior-like, and had a great deal of money. Lambi was more thought of by people than his father had been, chiefly because of his mother's relations; and between him and Olaf there was fond brotherhood. Now the winter next after the killing of Kotkell passed away. In the spring the brothers Olaf and Thorliæk met, and Olaf asked if Thorliæk was minded to keep on his house. Thorliæk said he was. Olaf said, "Yet I would beg you, kinsman, to change your way of life, and go abroad; you will be thought an honourable man wherever you come; but as to Hrut, our kinsman, I know he feels how your dealings with him come home to him. And it is little to my mind that the risk of your sitting so near to each other should be run any longer. For Hrut has a strong run of luck to fall back upon, and his sons are but reckless bravos. On account of my kinship I feel I should be placed in a difficulty if you, my kinsman, should come to quarrel in full enmity." Thorliæk replied, "I am not afraid of not being able to hold myself straight in the face of Hrut and his sons, and that is no reason why I should depart the country. But if you, brother, set much store by it, and feel yourself in a difficult position in this matter, then, for your words I will do this; for then I was best contented with my lot in life when I lived abroad. And I know you will not treat my son Bolli any the worse for my being nowhere near; for of all men I love him the best." Olaf said, "You have, indeed, taken an honourable course in this matter, if you do after my prayer; but as touching Bolli, I am minded to do to him henceforth as I have done hitherto, and to be to him and hold him no worse than my own sons." After that the brothers parted in great affection. Thorliæk now sold his land, and spent his money on his journey abroad. He bought a ship that stood up in Daymealness; and when he was full ready he stepped on board ship with his wife and household. That ship made a good voyage, and they made Norway in the autumn. Thence he went south to Denmark, as he did not feel at home in Norway, his kinsmen and friends there being either dead or driven out of the land. After that Thorliæk went to Gautland. It is said by most men that Thorliæk had little to do with old age; yet he was held a man of great worth throughout life. And there we close the story of Thorliæk.

Chap. XXXIX: Of Kjartan's Friendship for Bolli

At that time, as concerning the strife between Hrut and Thorliæk, it was ever the greatest gossip throughout the Broadfirth-Dales how that Hrut had had to abide a heavy lot at the hands of Kotkell and his sons. Then Osvif spoke to Gudrun and her brothers, and bade them call to mind whether they thought now it would have been the best counsel aforetime then and there to have plunged into the danger of dealing with such "hell-men" (terrible people) as Kotkell and his were. Then said Gudrun, "He is not counsel-bereft, father, who has the help of thy counsel." Olaf now abode at his manor in much honour, and all his sons are at home there, as was Bolli, their kinsman and foster-brother. Kjartan was foremost of all the sons of Olaf. Kjartan and Bolli loved each other the most, and Kjartan went nowhere that Bolli did not follow. Often Kjartan would go to the Sælingdale-spring, and mostly it happened that Gudrun was at the spring too. Kjartan liked talking to Gudrun, for she was both a woman of wits and clever of speech. It was the talk of all folk that of all men who were growing up at the time Kjartan was the most even match for Gudrun. Between Olaf and Osvif there was also great friendship, and often they would

invite one another, and not the less frequently so when fondness was growing up between the young folk. One day when Olaf was talking to Kjartan, he said: "I do not know why it is that I always take it to heart when you go to Laugar and talk to Gudrun. It is not because I do not consider Gudrun the foremost of all other women, for she is the one among womenkind whom I look upon as a thoroughly suitable match for you. But it is my foreboding, though I will not prophesy it, that we, my kinsmen and I, and the men of Laugar will not bring altogether good luck to bear on our dealings together." Kjartan said he would do nothing against his father's will where he could help himself, but he hoped things would turn out better than he made a guess to. Kjartan holds to his usual ways as to his visits (to Laugar), and Bolli always went with him, and so the next seasons passed.

Chap. XL: Kjartan and Bolli Voyage to Norway, A.D. 996

Asgeir was the name of a man, he was called Eider-drake. He lived at Asgeir's-river, in Willowdale; he was the son of Audun Skokul; he was the first of his kinsmen who came to Iceland; he took to himself Willowdale. Another son of Audun was named Thorgrim Hoaryhead; he was the father of Asmund, the father of Grettir. Asgeir Eider-drake had five children; one of his sons was called Audun, father of Asgeir, father of Audun, father of Egil, who had for wife Ulfeid, the daughter of Eyjolf the Lame; their son was Eyjolf, who was slain at the All Thing. Another of Asgeir's sons was named Thorvald; his daughter was Wala, whom Bishop Isleef had for wife; their son was Gizor, the bishop. A third son of Asgeir was named Kalf. All Asgeir's sons were hopeful men. Kalf Asgeirson was at that time out travelling, and was accounted of as the worthiest of men. One of Asgeir's daughters was named Thured; she married Thorkell Kuggi, the son of Thord Yeller; their son was Thorstein. Another of Asgeir's daughters was named Hrefna; she was the fairest woman in those northern countrysides and very winsome. Asgeir was a very mighty man. It is told how one time Kjartan Olafson went on a journey south to Burgfirth. Nothing is told of his journey before he got to Burg. There at that time lived Thorstein, Egil's son, his mother's brother. Bolli was with him, for the foster-brothers loved each other so dearly that neither thought he could enjoy himself if they were not together. Thorstein received Kjartan with loving kindness, and said he should be glad for his staying there a long rather than a short time. So Kjartan stayed awhile at Burg. That summer there was a ship standing up in Steam-river-Mouth, and this ship belonged to Kalf Asgeirson, who had been staying through the winter with Thorstein, Egil's son. Kjartan told Thorstein in secret that his chief errand to the south then was, that he wished to buy the half of Kalf's ship, "for I have set my mind on going abroad," and he asked Thorstein what sort of a man he thought Kalf was. Thorstein said he thought he was a good man and true. "I can easily understand," said Thorstein, "that you wish to see other men's ways of life, and your journey will be remarkable in one way or another, and your kinsfolk will be very anxious as to how the journey may speed for you." Kjartan said it would speed well enough. After that Kjartan bought a half share in Kalf's ship, and they made up half-shares partnership between them; Kjartan was to come on board when ten weeks of summer had passed. Kjartan was seen off with gifts on leaving Burg, and he and Bolli then rode home. When Olaf heard of this arrangement he said he thought Kjartan had made up his mind rather suddenly, but added that he would not foreclose the matter. A little later Kjartan rode to Laugar to tell Gudrun of his proposed journey abroad. Gudrun said, "You have decided this very suddenly, Kjartan," and she let fall sundry words about this, from which Kjartan got to understand that Gudrun was displeased with it. Kjartan said, "Do not let this displease you. I will do something else that shall please you." Gudrun said, "Be then a man of your word, for I shall speedily let you know what I want." Kjartan bade her do so. Gudrun said, "Then, I wish to go out with you this summer; if that comes off, you would have made amends to me for this hasty resolve, for I do not care for Iceland." Kjartan said, "That cannot be, your brothers are unsettled yet, and your father is old, and they would be bereft of all care if you went out

of the land; so you wait for me three winters." Gudrun said she would promise nothing as to that matter, and each was at variance with the other, and therewith they parted. Kjartan rode home. Olaf rode to the Thing that summer, and Kjartan rode with his father from the west out of Herdholt, and they parted at North-river-Dale. From thence Kjartan rode to his ship, and his kinsman Bolli went along with him. There were ten Icelanders altogether who went with Kjartan on this journey, and none would part with him for the sake of the love they bore him. So with this following Kjartan went to the ship, and Kalf Asgeirson greeted them warmly. Kjartan and Bolli took a great many goods with them abroad. They now got ready to start, and when the wind blew they sailed out along Burgfirth with a light and good breeze, and then out to sea. They had a good journey, and got to Norway to the northwards and came into Throndheim, and fell in with men there and asked for tidings. They were told that change of lords over the land had befallen, in that Earl Hakon had fallen and King Olaf Trygvason had come in, and all Norway had fallen under his power. King Olaf was ordering a change of faith in Norway, and the people took to it most unequally. Kjartan and his companions took their craft up to Nidaross. At that time many Icelanders had come to Norway who were men of high degree. There lay beside the landing-stage three ships, all owned by Icelanders. One of the ships belonged to Brand the Bounteous, son of Vermund Thorgrimson. And another ship belonged to Hallfred the Trouble-Bard. The third ship belonged to two brothers, one named Bjarni, and the other Thorhall; they were sons of Broad-river-Skeggi, out of Fleetlithe in the east. All these men had wanted to go west to Iceland that summer, but the king had forbidden all these ships to sail because the Icelanders would not take the new faith that he was preaching. All the Icelanders greeted Kjartan warmly, but especially Brand, as they had known each other already before. The Icelanders now took counsel together and came to an agreement among themselves that they would refuse this faith that the king preached, and all the men previously named bound themselves together to do this. Kjartan and his companions brought their ship up to the landing-stage and unloaded it and disposed of their goods. King Olaf was then in the town. He heard of the coming of the ship and that men of great account were on board. It happened one fair-weather day in the autumn that the men went out of the town to swim in the river Nid. Kjartan and his friends saw this. Then Kjartan said to his companions that they should also go and disport themselves that day. They did so. There was one man who was by much the best at this sport. Kjartan asked Bolli if he felt willing to try swimming against the townsman. Bolli answered, "I don't think I am a match for him." "I cannot think where your courage can now have got to," said Kjartan, "so I shall go and try." Bolli replied, "That you may do if you like." Kjartan then plunges into the river and up to this man who was the best swimmer and drags him forthwith under and keeps him down for awhile, and then lets him go up again. And when they had been up for a long while, this man suddenly clutches Kjartan and drags him under; and they keep down for such a time as Kjartan thought quite long enough, when up they come a second time. Not a word had either to say to the other. The third time they went down together, and now they keep under for much the longest time, and Kjartan now misdoubted him how this play would end, and thought he had never before found himself in such a tight place; but at last they come up and strike out for the bank. Then said the townsman, "Who is this man?" Kjartan told him his name. The townsman said, "You are very deft at swimming. Are you as good at other deeds of prowess as at this?" Kjartan answered rather coldly, "It was said when I was in Iceland that the others kept pace with this one. But now this one is not worth much." The townsman replied, "It makes some odds with whom you have had to do. But why do you not ask me anything?" Kjartan replied, "I do not want to know your name." The townsman answered, "You are not only a stalwart man, but you bear yourself very proudly as well, but none the less you shall know my name, and with whom you have been having a swimming match. Here is Olaf the king, the son of Tryggvi." Kjartan answered nothing, but turned away forthwith without his cloak. He had on a kirtle of red scarlet. The king was then well-nigh dressed; he called to Kjartan and bade him not go away so soon. Kjartan turned back,

but rather slowly. The king then took a very good cloak off his shoulders and gave it to Kjartan, saying he should not go back cloakless to his companions. Kjartan thanked the king for the gift, and went to his own men and showed them the cloak. His men were nowise pleased as this, for they thought Kjartan had got too much into the king's power; but matters went on quietly. The weather set in very hard that autumn, and there was a great deal of frost, the season being cold. The heathen men said it was not to be wondered at that the weather should be so bad; "it is all because of the newfangled ways of the king and this new faith that the gods are angry." The Icelanders kept all together in the town during the winter, and Kjartan took mostly the lead among them. On the weather taking a turn for the better, many people came to the town at the summons of King Olaf. Many people had become Christians in Thrandhome, yet there were a great many more who withstood the king. One day the king had a meeting out at Eyra, and preached the new faith to men—a long harangue and telling. The people of Thrandhome had a whole host of men, and in turn offered battle to the king. The king said they must know that he had had greater things to cope with than fighting there with churls out of Thrandhome. Then the good men lost heart and gave the whole case into the king's power, and many people were baptized then and there. After that, the meeting came to an end. That same evening the king sent men to the lodgings of the Icelanders, and bade them get sure knowledge of what they were saying. They did so. They heard much noise within. Then Kjartan began to speak, and said to Bolli, "How far are you willing, kinsman, to take this new faith the king preaches?" "I certainly am not willing thereto," said Bolli, "for their faith seems to me to be most feeble." Kjartan said, "Did ye not think the king was holding out threats against those who should be unwilling to submit to his will?" Bolli answered, "It certainly seemed to me that he spoke out very clearly that they would have to take exceeding hard treatment at his hands." "I will be forced under no one's thumb," said Kjartan, "while I have power to stand up and wield my weapons. I think it most unmanly, too, to be taken like a lamb in a fold or a fox in a trap. I think that is a better thing to choose, if a man must die in any case, to do first some such deed as shall be held aloft for a long time afterwards." Bolli said, "What will you do?" "I will not hide it from you," Kjartan replied; "I will burn the king in his hall." "There is nothing cowardly in that," said Bolli; "but this is not likely to come to pass, as far as I can see. The king, I take it, is one of great good luck and his guardian spirit mighty, and, besides, he has a faithful guard watching both day and night." Kjartan said that what most men failed in was daring, however valiant they might otherwise be. Bolli said it was not so certain who would have to be taunted for want of courage in the end. But here many men joined in, saying this was but an idle talk. Now when the king's spies had overheard this, they went away and told the king all that had been said. The next morning the king wished to hold a meeting, and summoned all the Icelanders to it; and when the meeting was opened the king stood up and thanked men for coming, all those who were his friends and had taken the new faith. Then he called to him for a parley the Icelanders. The king asked them if they would be baptized, but they gave little reply to that. The king said they were making for themselves the choice that would answer the worst. "But, by the way, who of you thought it the best thing to do to burn me in my hall?" Then Kjartan answered, "You no doubt think that he who did say it would not have the pluck to confess it; but here you can see him." "I can indeed see you," said the king, "man of no small counsels, but it is not fated for you to stand over my head, done to death by you; and you have done quite enough that you should be prevented making a vow to burn more kings in their houses yet, for the reason of being taught better things than you know and because I do not know whether your heart was in your speech, and that you have bravely acknowledged it, I will not take your life. It may also be that you follow the faith the better the more outspoken you are against it; and I can also see this, that on the day you let yourself be baptized of your own free will, several ships' crews will on that day also take the faith. And I think it likely to happen that your relations and friends will give much heed to what you speak to them when you return to Iceland. And it is in my mind that you,

Kjartan, will have a better faith when you return from Norway than you had when you came hither. Go now in peace and safety wheresoever you like from the meeting. For the time being you shall not be tormented into Christianity, for God says that He wills that no one shall come to Him unwillingly." Good cheer was made at the king's speech, though mostly from the Christian men; but the heathen left it to Kjartan to answer as he liked. Kjartan said, "We thank you, king, that you grant safe peace unto us, and the way whereby you may most surely draw us to take the faith is, on the one hand, to forgive us great offences, and on the other to speak in this kindly manner on all matters, in spite of your this day having us and all our concerns in your power even as it pleases you. Now, as for myself, I shall receive the faith in Norway on that understanding alone that I shall give some little worship to Thor the next winter when I get back to Iceland." Then the king said and smiled, "It may be seen from the mien of Kjartan that he puts more trust in his own weapons and strength than in Thor and Odin." Then the meeting was broken up. After a while many men egged the king on to force Kjartan and his followers to receive the faith, and thought it unwise to have so many heathen men near about him. The king answered wrathfully, and said he thought there were many Christians who were not nearly so well-behaved as was Kjartan or his company either, "and for such one would have long to wait." The king caused many profitable things to be done that winter; he had a church built and the market-town greatly enlarged. This church was finished at Christmas. Then Kjartan said they should go so near the church that they might see the ceremonies of this faith the Christians followed; and many fell in, saying that would be right good pastime. Kjartan with his following and Bolli went to the church; in that train was also Hallfred and many other Icelanders. The king preached the faith before the people, and spoke both long and tellingly, and the Christians made good cheer at his speech. And when Kjartan and his company went back to their chambers, a great deal of talk arose as to how they had liked the looks of the king at this time, which Christians accounted of as the next greatest festival. "For the king said, so that we might hear, that this night was born the Lord, in whom we are now to believe, if we do as the king bids us." Kjartan says: "So greatly was I taken with the looks of the king when I saw him for the first time, that I knew at once that he was a man of the highest excellence, and that feeling has kept steadfast ever since, when I have seen him at folk-meetings, and that but by much the best, however, I liked the looks of him to-day; and I cannot help thinking that the turn of our concerns hangs altogether on our believing Him to be the true God in whom the king bids us to believe, and the king cannot by any means be more eager in wishing that I take this faith than I am to let myself be baptized. The only thing that puts off my going straightway to see the king now is that the day is far spent, and the king, I take it, is now at table; but that day will be delayed, on which we, companions, will let ourselves all be baptized." Bolli took to this kindly, and bade Kjartan alone look to their affairs. The king had heard of the talk between Kjartan and his people before the tables were cleared away, for he had his spies in every chamber of the heathens. The king was very glad at this, and said, "In Kjartan has come true the saw: 'High tides best for happy signs.'" And the first thing the next morning early, when the king went to church, Kjartan met him in the street with a great company of men. Kjartan greeted the king with great cheerfulness, and said he had a pressing errand with him. The king took his greeting well, and said he had had a thoroughly clear news as to what his errand must be, "and that matter will be easily settled by you." Kjartan begged they should not delay fetching the water, and said that a great deal would be needed. The king answered and smiled. "Yes, Kjartan," says he, "on this matter I do not think your eager-mindedness would part us, not even if you put the price higher still." After that Kjartan and Bolli were baptized and all their crew, and a multitude of other men as well. This was on the second day of Yule before Holy Service. After that the king invited Kjartan to his Yule feast with Bolli his kinsman. It is the tale of most men that Kjartan on the day he laid aside his white baptismal-robcs became a liegeman of the king's, he and Bolli both. Hallfred was not baptized that day, for he made it a point that the king himself should be his godfather, so the king

put it off till the next day. Kjartan and Bolli stayed with Olaf the king the rest of the winter. The king held Kjartan before all other men for the sake of his race and manly prowess, and it is by all people said that Kjartan was so winsome that he had not a single enemy within the court. Every one said that there had never before come from Iceland such a man as Kjartan. Bolli was also one of the most stalwart of men, and was held in high esteem by all good men. The winter now passes away, and, as spring came on, men got ready for their journeys, each as he had a mind to.

Chap. XLI: Bolli returns to Iceland, A.D. 999

Kalf Asgeirson went to see Kjartan and asks what he was minded to do that summer. Kjartan said, "I have been thinking chiefly that we had better take our ship to England, where there is a good market for Christian men. But first I will go and see the king before I settle this, for he did not seem pleased at my going on this journey when we talked about it in the spring." Then Kalf went away and Kjartan went to speak to the king, greeting him courteously. The king received him most kindly, and asked what he and his companion (Kalf) had been talking about. Kjartan told what they had mostly in mind to do, but said that his errand to the king was to beg leave to go on this journey. "As to that matter, I will give you your choice, Kjartan. Either you will go to Iceland this summer, and bring men to Christianity by force or by expedients; but if you think this too difficult a journey, I will not let you go away on any account, for you are much better suited to serve noble men than to turn here into a chapman." Kjartan chose rather to stay with the king than to go to Iceland and preach the faith to them there, and said he could not be contending by force against his own kindred. "Moreover, it would be more likely that my father and other chiefs, who are near kinsmen of mine, would go against thy will with all the less stubbornness the better beholden I am under your power." The king said, "This is chosen both wisely and as beseems a great man." The king gave Kjartan a whole set of new clothes, all cut out of scarlet cloth, and they suited him well; for people said that King Olaf and Kjartan were of an even height when they went under measure. King Olaf sent the court priest, named Thangbrand, to Iceland. He brought his ship to Swanfirth, and stayed with Side-Hall all the winter at Wash-river, and set forth the faith to people both with fair words and harsh punishments. Thangbrand slew two men who went most against him. Hall received the faith in the spring, and was baptized on the Saturday before Easter, with all his household; then Gizor the White let himself be baptized, so did Hjalti Skeggjason and many other chiefs, though there were many more who spoke against it; and then dealings between heathen men and Christians became scarcely free of danger. Sundry chiefs even took counsel together to slay Thangbrand, as well as such men who should stand up for him. Because of this turmoil Thangbrand ran away to Norway, and came to meet King Olaf, and told him the tidings of what had befallen in his journey, and said he thought Christianity would never thrive in Iceland. The king was very wroth at this, and said that many Icelanders would rue the day unless they came round to him. That summer Hjalti Skeggjason was made an outlaw at the Thing for blaspheming the gods. Runolf Ulfson, who lived in Dale, under Isles'-fells, the greatest of chieftains, upheld the lawsuit against him. That summer Gizor left Iceland and Hjalti with him, and they came to Norway, and went forthwith to find King Olaf. The king gave them a good welcome, and said they had taken a wise counsel; he bade them stay with him, and that offer they took with thanks. Sverling, son of Runolf of Dale, had been in Norway that winter, and was bound for Iceland in the summer. His ship was floating beside the landing stage all ready, only waiting for a wind. The king forbade him to go away, and said that no ships should go to Iceland that summer. Sverling went to the king and pleaded his case, and begged leave to go, and said it mattered a great deal to him, that they should not have to unship their cargo again. The king spake, and then he was wroth: "It is well for the son of a sacrificer to be where he likes it worst." So Sverling went no whither. That winter nothing to tell of befall. The next summer the king sent Gizor and Hjalti Skeggjason to Iceland to preach the faith anew, and kept four men back as hostages Kjartan Olafson, Hall-

dor, the son of Gudmund the Mighty, Kolbein, son of Thord the priest of Frey, and Sverling, son of Runolf of Dale. Bolli made up his mind to journey with Gizor and Hjalti, and went to Kjartan, his kinsman, and said, "I am now ready to depart; I should wait for you through the next winter, if next summer you were more free to go away than you are now. But I cannot help thinking that the king will on no account let you go free. I also take it to be the truth that you yourself call to mind but few of the things that afford pastime in Iceland when you sit talking to Ingibjorg, the king's sister." She was at the court of King Olaf, and the most beautiful of all the women who were at that time in the land. Kjartan said, "Do not say such things, but bear my greeting to both my kinsfolk and friends."

Chap. XLII: Bolli makes love to Gudrun, A.D. 1000

After that Kjartan and Bolli parted, and Gizor and Hjalti sailed from Norway and had a good journey, and came to the Westmen's Isles at the time the Althing was sitting, and went from thence to the mainland, and had there meetings and parleys with their kinsmen. Thereupon they went to the Althing and preached the faith to the people in an harangue both long and telling, and then all men in Iceland received the faith. Bolli rode from the Thing to Herdholt in fellowship with his uncle Olaf, who received him with much loving-kindness. Bolli rode to Laugar to disport himself after he had been at home for a short time, and a good welcome he had there. Gudrun asked very carefully about his journey and then about Kjartan. Bolli answered right readily all Gudrun asked, and said there were no tidings to tell of his journey. "But as to what concerns Kjartan there are, in truth, the most excellent news to be told of his ways of life, for he is in the king's bodyguard, and is there taken before every other man; but I should not wonder if he did not care to have much to do with this country for the next few winters to come." Gudrun then asked if there was any other reason for it than the friendship between Kjartan and the king. Bolli then tells what sort of way people were talking about the friendship of Kjartan with Ingibjorg the king's sister, and said he could not help thinking the king would sooner marry Ingibjorg to Kjartan than let him go away if the choice lay between the two things. Gudrun said these were good tidings, "but Kjartan would be fairly matched only if he got a good wife." Then she let the talk drop all of a sudden and went away and was very red in the face; but other people doubted if she really thought these tidings as good as she gave out she thought they were. Bolli remained at home in Herdholt all that summer, and had gained much honour from his journey; all his kinsfolk and acquaintances set great store by his valiant bearing; he had, moreover, brought home with him a great deal of wealth. He would often go over to Laugar and while away time talking to Gudrun. One day Bolli asked Gudrun what she would answer if he were to ask her in marriage. Gudrun replied at once, "No need for you to bespeak such a thing, Bolli, for I cannot marry any man whilst I know Kjartan to be still alive." Bolli answered, "I think then you will have to abide husbandless for sundry winters if you are to wait for Kjartan; he might have chosen to give me some message concerning the matter if he set his heart at all greatly on it." Sundry words they gave and took, each at variance with the other. Then Bolli rode home.

Chap. XLIII: Kjartan comes back to Iceland, A.D. 1001

A little after this Bolli talked to his uncle Olaf, and said, "It has come to this, uncle, that I have it in mind to settle down and marry, for I am now grown up to man's estate. In this matter I should like to have the assistance of your words and your backing-up, for most of the men hereabouts are such as will set much store by your words." Olaf replied, "Such is the case with most women, I am minded to think, that they would be fully well matched in you for a husband. And I take it you have not broached this matter without first having made up your mind as to where you mean to come down." Bolli said, "I shall not go beyond this countryside to woo myself a wife whilst there is such an goodly match so near at hand. My will is to woo Gudrun, Osvif's daughter, for she is

now the most renowned of women.” Olaf answered, “Ah, that is just a matter with which I will have nothing to do. To you it is in no way less well known, Bolli, than to me, what talk there was of the love between Kjartan and Gudrun; but if you have set your heart very much on this, I will put no hindrance in the way if you and Osvif settle the matter between you. But have you said anything to Gudrun about it?” Bolli said that he had once hinted at it, but that she had not given much heed to it, “but I think, however, that Osvif will have most to say in the matter.” Olaf said Bolli could go about the business as it pleased himself. Not very long after Bolli rode from home with Olaf’s sons, Halldor and Steinthor; there were twelve of them together. They rode to Laugar, and Osvif and his sons gave them a good welcome. Bolli said he wished to speak to Osvif, and he set forth his wooing, and asked for the hand of Gudrun, his daughter. Osvif answered in this wise, “As you know, Bolli, Gudrun is a widow, and has herself to answer for her, but, as for myself, I shall urge this on.” Osvif now went to see Gudrun, and told her that Bolli Thorliekson had come there, “and has asked you in marriage; it is for you now to give the answer to this matter. And herein I may speedily make known my own will, which is, that Bolli will not be turned away if my counsel shall avail.” Gudrun answered, “You make a swift work of looking into this matter; Bolli himself once bespoke it before me, and I rather warded it off, and the same is still uppermost in my mind.” Osvif said, “Many a man will tell you that this is spoken more in overweening pride than in wise forethought if you refuse such a man as is Bolli. But as long as I am alive, I shall look out for you, my children, in all affairs which I know better how to see through things than you do.” And as Osvif took such a strong view of the matter, Gudrun, as far as she was concerned, would not give an utter refusal, yet was most unwilling on all points. The sons of Osvif’s urged the matter on eagerly, seeing what great avail an alliance with Bolli would be to them; so the long and short of the matter was that the betrothal took place then and there, and the wedding was to be held at the time of the winter nights. Thereupon Bolli rode home and told this settlement to Olaf, who did not hide his displeasure thereat. Bolli stayed on at home till he was to go to the wedding. He asked his uncle to it, but Olaf accepted it nowise quickly, though, at last, he yielded to the prayers of Bolli. It was a noble feast this at Laugar. Bolli stayed there the winter after. There was not much love between Gudrun and Bolli so far as she was concerned. When the summer came, and ships began to go and come between Iceland and Norway, the tidings spread to Norway that Iceland was all Christian. King Olaf was very glad at that, and gave leave to go to Iceland unto all those men whom he had kept as hostages, and to fare whenever they liked. Kjartan answered, for he took the lead of all those who had been hostages, “Have great thanks, Lord King, and this will be the choice we take, to go and see Iceland this summer.” Then King Olaf said, “I must not take back my word, Kjartan, yet my order pointed rather to other men than to yourself, for in my view you, Kjartan, have been more of a friend than a hostage through your stay here. My wish would be, that you should not set your heart on going to Iceland though you have noble relations there; for, I take it, you could choose for yourself such a station in life in Norway, the like of which would not be found in Iceland.” Then Kjartan answered, “May our Lord reward you, sire, for all the honours you have bestowed on me since I came into your power, but I am still in hopes that you will give leave to me, no less than to the others you have kept back for a while.” The king said so it should be, but avowed that it would be hard for him to get in his place any untitled man such as Kjartan was. That winter Kalf Asgeirson had been in Norway and had brought, the autumn before, west-away from England, the ship and merchandise he and Kjartan had owned. And when Kjartan had got leave for his journey to Iceland Kalf and he set themselves to get the ship ready. And when the ship was all ready Kjartan went to see Ingibjorg, the king’s sister. She gave him a cheery welcome, and made room for him to sit beside her, and they fell a-talking together, and Kjartan tells Ingibjorg that he has arranged his journey to Iceland. Then Ingibjorg said, “I am minded to think, Kjartan, that you have done this of your own wilfulness rather than because you have been urged by men to go away from Norway and to Iceland.” But thenceforth words be-

tween them were drowned in silence. Amidst this Ingibjorg turns to a “mead-cask” that stood near her, and takes out of it a white coif inwoven with gold and gives it to Kjartan, saying, that it was far too good for Gudrun Osvif’s daughter to fold it round her head, yet “you will give her the coif as a bridal gift, for I wish the wives of the Icelanders to see as much as that she with whom you have had your talks in Norway comes of no thrall’s blood.” It was in a pocket of costly stuff, and was altogether a most precious thing. “Now I shall not go to see you off,” said Ingibjorg. “Fare you well, and hail!” After that Kjartan stood up and embraced Ingibjorg, and people told it as a true story that they took it sorely to heart being parted. And now Kjartan went away and unto the king, and told the king he now was ready for his journey. Then the king led Kjartan to his ship and many men with him, and when they came to where the ship was floating with one of its gangways to land, the king said, “Here is a sword, Kjartan, that you shall take from me at our parting; let this weapon be always with you, for my mind tells me you will never be a ‘weapon-bitten’ man if you bear this sword.” It was a most noble keepsake, and much ornamented. Kjartan thanked the king with fair words for all the honour and advancement he had bestowed on him while he had been in Norway. Then the king spoke, “This I will bid you, Kjartan, that you keep your faith well.” After that they parted, the king and Kjartan in dear friendship, and Kjartan stepped on board his ship. The king looked after him and said, “Great is the worth of Kjartan and his kindred, but to cope with their fate is not an easy matter.”

Chap. XLIV: Kjartan comes home, A.D. 1001

Now Kjartan and Kalf set sail for the main. They had a good wind, and were only a short time out at sea. They hove into White-river, in Burgfirth. The tidings spread far and wide of the coming of Kjartan. When Olaf, his father, and his other kinsfolk heard of it they were greatly rejoiced. Olaf rode at once from the west out of the Dales and south to Burgfirth, and there was a very joyful meeting between father and son. Olaf asked Kjartan to go and stay with him, with as many of his men as he liked to bring. Kjartan took that well, and said that there only of all places in Iceland he meant to abide. Olaf now rides home to Herdholt, and Kjartan remained with his ship during the summer. He now heard of the marriage of Gudrun, but did not trouble himself at all over it; but that had heretofore been a matter of anxiety to many. Gudmund, Solmund’s son, Kjartan’s brother-in-law, and Thurid, his sister, came to his ship, and Kjartan gave them a cheery welcome. Asgeir Eider-drake came to the ship too to meet his son Kalf, and journeying with him was Hrefna his daughter, the fairest of women. Kjartan bade his sister Thurid have such of his wares as she liked, and the same Kalf said to Hrefna. Kalf now unlocked a great chest and bade them go and have a look at it. That day a gale sprang up, and Kjartan and Kalf had to go out to moor their ship, and when that was done they went home to the booths. Kalf was the first to enter the booth, where Thurid and Hrefna had turned out most of the things in the chest. Just then Hrefna snatched up the coif and unfolded it, and they had much to say as to how precious a thing it was. Then Hrefna said she would coif herself with it, and Thurid said she had better, and Hrefna did so. When Kalf saw that he gave her to understand that she had done amiss, and bade her take it off at her swiftest. “For that is the one thing that we, Kjartan and I, do not own in common.” And as he said this Kjartan came into the booth. He had heard their talk, and fell in at once and told them there was nothing amiss. So Hrefna sat still with the head-dress on. Kjartan looked at her heedfully and said, “I think the coif becomes you very well, Hrefna,” says he, “and I think it fits the best that both together, coif and maiden, be mine.” Then Hrefna answered, “Most people take it that you are in no hurry to marry, and also that the woman you woo, you will be sure to get for wife.” Kjartan said it would not matter much whom he married, but he would not stand being kept long a waiting wooer by any woman. “Now I see that this gear suits you well, and it suits well that you become my wife.” Hrefna now took off the head-dress and gave it to Kjartan, who put it away in a safe place. Gudmund and Thurid asked Kjartan to come north to them for a friendly stay some time that winter, and Kjartan promised the journey. Kalf As-

geirson betook himself north with his father. Kjartan and he now divided their partnership, and that went off altogether in good-nature and friendship. Kjartan also rode from his ship westward to the Dales, and they were twelve of them together. Kjartan now came home to Herdholt, and was joyfully received by everybody. Kjartan had his goods taken to the west from the ship during the autumn. The twelve men who rode with Kjartan stayed at Herdholt all the winter. Olaf and Osvif kept to the same wont of asking each other to their house, which was that each should go to the other every other autumn. That autumn the wassail was to be at Laugar, and Olaf and all the Herdholtings were to go thither. Gudrun now spoke to Bolli, and said she did not think he had told her the truth in all things about the coming back of Kjartan. Bolli said he had told the truth about it as best he knew it. Gudrun spoke little on this matter, but it could be easily seen that she was very displeased, and most people would have it that she still was pining for Kjartan, although she tried to hide it. Now time glides on till the autumn feast was to be held at Laugar. Olaf got ready and bade Kjartan come with him. Kjartan said he would stay at home and look after the household. Olaf bade him not to show that he was angry with his kinsmen. "Call this to mind, Kjartan, that you have loved no man so much as your foster-brother Bolli, and it is my wish that you should come, for things will soon settle themselves between you, kinsmen, if you meet each other." Kjartan did as his father bade him. He took the scarlet clothes that King Olaf had given him at parting, and dressed himself gaily; he girded his sword, the king's gift, on; and he had a gilt helm on his head, and on his side a red shield with the Holy Cross painted on it in gold; he had in his hand a spear, with the socket inlaid with gold. All his men were gaily dressed. There were in all between twenty and thirty men of them. They now rode out of Herdholt and went on till they came to Laugar. There were a great many men gathered together already.

Chap. XLV: Kjartan marries Hrefna, A.D. 1002

Bolli, together with the sons of Osvif, went out to meet Olaf and his company, and gave them a cheery welcome. Bolli went to Kjartan and kissed him, and Kjartan took his greeting. After that they were seen into the house, Bolli was of the merriest towards them, and Olaf responded to that most heartily, but Kjartan was rather silent. The feast went off well. Now Bolli had some stud-horses which were looked upon as the best of their kind. The stallion was great and goodly, and had never failed at fight; it was light of coat, with red ears and forelock. Three mares went with it, of the same hue as the stallion. These horses Bolli wished to give to Kjartan, but Kjartan said he was not a horsey man, and could not take the gift. Olaf bade him take the horses, "for these are most noble gifts." Kjartan gave a flat refusal. They parted after this nowise blithely, and the Herdholtings went home, and all was quiet. Kjartan was rather gloomy all the winter, and people could have but little talk of him. Olaf thought this a great misfortune. That winter after Yule Kjartan got ready to leave home, and there were twelve of them together, bound for the countrysides of the north. They now rode on their way till they came to Asbjornness, north in Willowdale, and there Kjartan was greeted with the greatest blitheness and cheerfulness. The housing there was of the noblest. Hall, the son of Gudmund, was about twenty winters old, and took much after the kindred of the men of Salmon-river-Dale; and it is all men's say, there was no more valiant-looking a man in all the north land. Hall greeted Kjartan, his uncle, with the greatest blitheness. Sports are now at once started at Asbjornness, and men were gathered together from far and near throughout the countrysides, and people came from the west from Midfirth and from Waterness and Waterdale all the way and from out of Longdale, and there was a great gathering together. It was the talk of all folk how strikingly Kjartan showed above other men. Now the sports were set going, and Hall took the lead. He asked Kjartan to join in the play, "and I wish, kinsman, you would show your courtesy in this." Kjartan said, "I have been training for sports but little of late, for there were other things to do with King Olaf, but I will not refuse you this for once." So Kjartan now got ready to play,

and the strongest men there were chosen out to go against him. The game went on all day long, but no man had either strength or liteness of limb to cope with Kjartan. And in the evening when the games were ended, Hall stood up and said, "It is the wish and offer of my father concerning those men who have come from the farthest hither, that they all stay here over night and take up the pastime again to-morrow." At this message there was made a good cheer, and the offer deemed worthy of a great man. Kalf Asgeirson was there, and he and Kjartan were dearly fond of each other. His sister Hrefna was there also, and was dressed most showily. There were over a hundred (*i.e.* over 120) men in the house that night. And the next day sides were divided for the games again. Kjartan sat by and looked on at the sports. Thurid, his sister, went to talk to him, and said, "It is told me, brother, that you have been rather silent all the winter, and men say it must be because you are pining after Gudrun, and set forth as a proof thereof

that no fondness now is shown between you and Bolli, such as through all time there had been between you. Do now the good and befitting thing, and don't allow yourself to take this to heart, and grudge not your kinsman a good wife. To me it seems your best counsel to marry, as you bespoke it last summer, although the match be not altogether even for you, where Hrefna is, for such a match you cannot find within this land. Asgeir, her father, is a noble and a high-born man, and he does not lack wealth wherewith to make this match fairer still; moreover, another daughter of his is married to a mighty man. You have also told me yourself that Kalf Asgeirson is the doughtiest of men, and their way of life is of the stateliest. It is my wish that you go and talk to Hrefna, and I ween you will find that there great wits and goodness go together." Kjartan took this matter up well, and said she had ably pleaded the case. After this Kjartan and Hrefna are brought together that they may have their talk by themselves, and they talked together all day. In the evening Thurid asked Kjartan how he liked the manner in which Hrefna turned her speech. He was well pleased about it, and said he thought the woman was in all ways one of the noblest as far as he could see. The next morning men were sent to Asgeir to ask him to Asbjornness. And now they had a parley between them on this affair, and Kjartan wooed Hrefna, Asgeir's daughter. Asgeir took up the matter with a good will, for he was a wise man, and saw what an honourable offer was made to them. Kalf, too, urged the matter on very much, saying, "I will not let anything be spared (towards the dowry)." Hrefna, in her turn, did not make unwilling answers, but bade her father follow his own counsel. So now the match was covenanted and settled before witnesses. Kjartan would hear of nothing but that the wedding should be held at Herdholt, and Asgeir and Kalf had nothing to say against it. The wedding was then settled to take place at Herdholt when five weeks of summer had passed. After that Kjartan rode home with great gifts. Olaf was delighted at these tidings, for Kjartan was much merrier than before he left home. Kjartan kept fast through Lent, following therein the example of no man in this land; and it is said he was the first man who ever kept fast in this land. Men thought it so wonderful a thing that Kjartan could live so long without meat, that people came over long ways to see him. In a like manner Kjartan's other ways went beyond those of other men. Now Easter passed, and after that Kjartan and Olaf made ready a great feast. At the appointed time Asgeir and Kalf came from the north as well as Gudmund and Hall, and altogether there were sixty men. Olaf and Kjartan had already many men gathered together there. It was a most brave feast, and for a whole week the feasting went on. Kjartan made Hrefna a bridal gift of the rich head-dress, and a most famous gift was that; for no one was there so knowing or so rich as ever to have seen or possessed such a treasure, for it is the saying of thoughtful men that eight ounces of gold were woven into the coif. Kjartan was so merry at the feast that he entertained every one with his talk, telling of his journey. Men did marvel much how great were the matters that entered into that tale; for he had served the noblest of lords—King Olaf Tryggvason. And when the feast was ended Kjartan gave Gudmund and Hall good gifts, as he did to all the other great men. The father and son gained great renown from this feast. Kjartan and Hrefna loved each other very dearly.

Chap. XLVI: Feast at Herdholt and the Loss of Kjartan's Sword, A.D. 1002

Olaf and Osvif were still friends, though there was some deal of ill-will between the younger people. That summer Olaf had his feast half a month before winter. And Osvif was also making ready a feast, to be held at "Winter-nights," and they each asked the other to their homes, with as many men as each deemed most honourable to himself. It was Osvif's turn to go first to the feast at Olaf's, and he came to Herdholt at the time appointed. In his company were Bolli and Gudrun and the sons of Osvif. In the morning one of the women on going down the hall was talking how the ladies would be shown to their seats. And just as Gudrun had come right against the bedroom wherein Kjartan was wont to rest, and where even then he was dressing and slipping on a red kirtle of scarlet, he called out to the woman who had been speaking about the seating of the women, for no one else was quicker in giving the answer, "Hrefna shall sit in the high seat and be most honoured in all things so long as I am alive." But before this Gudrun had always had the high seat at Herdholt and everywhere else. Gudrun heard this, and looked at Kjartan and flushed up, but said nothing. The next day Gudrun was talking to Hrefna, and said she ought to coif herself with the head-dress, and show people the most costly treasure that had ever come to Iceland. Kjartan was near, but not quite close, and heard what Gudrun said, and he was quicker to answer than Hrefna. "She shall not coif herself with the headgear at this feast, for I set more store by Hrefna owning the greatest of treasures than by the guests having it to feast thereon their eyes at this time." The feast at Olaf's was to last a week. The next day Gudrun spoke on the sly to Hrefna, and asked her to show her the head-dress, and Hrefna said she would. The next day they went to the out-bower where the precious things were kept, and Hrefna opened a chest and took out the pocket of costly stuff, and took from thence the coif and showed it to Gudrun. She unfolded the coif and looked at it a while, but said no word of praise or blame. After that Hrefna put it back, and they went to their places, and after that all was joy and amusement. And the day the guests should ride away Kjartan busied himself much about matters in hand, getting change of horses for those who had come from afar, and speeding each one on his journey as he needed. Kjartan had not his sword "King's-gift" with him while he was taken up with these matters, yet was he seldom wont to let it go out of his hand. After this he went to his room where the sword had been, and found it now gone. He then went and told his father of the loss. Olaf said, "We must go about this most gently. I will get men to spy into each batch of them as they ride away," and he did so. An the White had to ride with Osvif's company, and to keep an eye upon men turning aside, or baiting. They rode up past Lea-shaws, and past the homesteads which are called Shaws, and stopped at one of the homesteads at Shaws, and got off their horses. Thorolf, son of Osvif, went out from the homestead with a few other men. They went out of sight amongst the brushwood, whilst the others tarried at the Shaws' homestead. An followed him all the way unto Salmon-river, where it flows out of Sælingsdale, and said he would turn back there. Thorolf said it would have done no harm though he had gone nowhere at all. The night before a little snow had fallen so that footprints could be traced. An rode back to the brushwood, and followed the footprints of Thorolf to a certain ditch or bog. He groped down with his hand, and grasped the hilt of a sword. An wished to have witnesses with him to this, and rode for Thorarin in Sælingsdale Tongue, and he went with An to take up the sword. After that An brought the sword back to Kjartan. Kjartan wrapt it in a cloth, and laid it in a chest. The place was afterwards called Sword-ditch, where An and Thorarin had found the "King's-gift." This was all kept quiet. The scabbard was never found again. Kjartan always treasured the sword less hereafter than heretofore. This affair Kjartan took much to heart, and would not let the matter rest there. Olaf said, "Do not let it pain you; true, they have done a nowise pretty trick, but you have got no harm from it. We shall not let people have this to laugh at, that we make a quarrel about such a thing, these being but friends and kinsmen on the other side." And through these reasonings of Olaf, Kjartan let matters rest in quiet. After that Olaf

got ready to go to the feast at Laugar at "winter nights," and told Kjartan he must go too. Kjartan was very unwilling thereto, but promised to go at the bidding of his father. Hrefna was also to go, but she wished to leave her coif behind. "Goodwife," Thorgerd said, "whenever will you take out such a peerless keepsake if it is to lie down in chests when you go to feasts?" Hrefna said, "Many folk say that it is not unlikely that I may come to places where I have fewer people to envy me than at Laugar." Thorgerd said, "I have no great belief in people who let such things fly here from house to house." And because Thorgerd urged it eagerly Hrefna took the coif, and Kjartan did not forbid it when he saw how the will of his mother went. After that they betake themselves to the journey and came to Laugar in the evening, and had a goodly welcome there. Thorgerd and Hrefna handed out their clothes to be taken care of. But in the morning when the women should dress themselves Hrefna looked for the coif and it was gone from where she had put it away. It was looked for far and near, and could not be found. Gudrun said it was most likely the coif had been left behind at home, or that she had packed it so carelessly that it had fallen out on the way. Hrefna now told Kjartan that the coif was lost. He answered and said it was no easy matter to try to make them take care of things, and bade her now leave matters quiet; and told his father what game was up. Olaf said, "My will is still as before, that you leave alone and let pass by this trouble and I will probe this matter to the bottom in quiet; for I would do anything that you and Bolli should not fall out. Best to bind up a whole flesh, kinsman," says he. Kjartan said, "I know well, father, that you wish the best for everybody in this affair; yet I know not whether I can put up with being thus overborne by these folk of Laugar." The day that men were to ride away from the feast Kjartan raised his voice and said, "I call on you, Cousin Bolli, to show yourself more willing henceforth than hitherto to do to us as behoves a good man and true. I shall not set this matter forth in a whisper, for within the knowledge of many people it is that a loss has befallen here of a thing which we think has slipped into your own keep. This harvest, when we gave a feast at Herdholt, my sword was taken; it came back to me, but not the scabbard. Now again there has been lost here a keepsake which men will esteem a thing of price. Come what may, I will have them both back." Bolli answered, "What you put down to me, Kjartan, is not my fault, and I should have looked for anything else from you sooner than that you would charge me with theft." Kjartan says, "I must think that the people who have been putting their heads together in this affair are so near to you that it ought to be in your power to make things good if you but would. You affront us far beyond necessity, and long we have kept peaceful in face on your enmity. But now it must be made known that matters will not rest as they are now." Then Gudrun answered his speech and said, "Now you rake up a fire which it would be better should not smoke. Now, let it be granted, as you say, that there be some people here who have put their heads together with a view to the coif disappearing. I can only think that they have gone and taken what was their own. Think what you like of what has become of the head-dress, but I cannot say I dislike it though it should be bestowed in such a way as that Hrefna should have little chance to improve her apparel with it henceforth." After that they parted heavy of heart, and the Herdholtings rode home. That was the end of the feasts, yet everything was to all appearances quiet. Nothing was ever heard of the head-dress. But many people held the truth to be that Thorolf had burnt it in fire by the order of Gudrun, his sister. Early that winter Asgeir Eider-drake died. His sons inherited his estate and chattels.

Chap. XLVII: Kjartan goes to Laugar, and of the Bargain for Tongue, A.D. 1003

After Yule that winter Kjartan got men together, and they mustered sixty men altogether. Kjartan did not tell his father the reason of his journey, and Olaf asked but little about it. Kjartan took with him tents and stores, and rode on his way until he came to Laugar. He bade his men get off their horses, and said that some should look after the horses and some put up the tents. At that time it was the custom that outhouses were outside, and not so

very far away from the dwelling-house, and so it was at Laugar. Kjartan had all the doors of the house taken, and forbade all the inmates to go outside, and for three nights he made them do their errands within the house. After that Kjartan rode home to Herd-holt, and each of his followers rode to his own home. Olaf was very ill-pleased with this raid, but Thorgerd said there was no reason for blame, for the men of Laugar had deserved this, yea, and a still greater shame. Then Hrefna said, "Did you have any talk with any one at Laugar, Kjartan?" He answered, "There was but little chance of that," and said he and Bolli had exchanged only a few words. Then Hrefna smiled and said, "It was told me as truth that you and Gudrun had some talk together, and I have likewise heard how she was arrayed, that she had coifed herself with the head-dress, and it suited her exceeding well." Kjartan answered, and coloured up, and it was easy to see he was angry with her for making a mockery of this. "Nothing of what you say, Hrefna, passed before my eyes, and there was no need for Gudrun to coif herself with the head-dress to look statelier than all other women." Thereat Hrefna dropped the talk. The men of Laugar bore this exceedingly ill, and thought it by much a greater and worse disgrace than if Kjartan had even killed a man or two of them. The sons of Osvif were the wildest over this matter, but Bolli quieted them rather. Gudrun was the fewest-spoken on the matter, yet men gathered from her words that it was uncertain whether any one took it as sorely to heart as she did. Full enmity now grows up between the men of Laugar and the Herdholtings. As the winter wore on Hrefna gave birth to a child, a boy, and he was named Asgier. Thorarin, the Goodman of Tongue, let it be known that he wished to sell the land of Tongue. The reason was that he was drained of money, and that he thought ill-will was swelling too much between the people of the countryside, he himself being a friend of either side. Bolli thought he would like to buy the land and settle down on it, for the men of Laugar had little land and much cattle. Bolli and Gudrun rode to Tongue at the advice of Osvif; they thought it a very handy chance to be able to secure this land so near to themselves, and Osvif bade them not to let a small matter stand in the way of a covenant. Then they (Bolli and Gudrun) bespoke the purchase with Thorarin, and came to terms as to what the price should be, and also as to the kind wherein it should be paid, and the bargain was settled with Thorarin. But the buying was not done in the presence of witnesses, for there were not so many men there at the time as were lawfully necessary. Bolli and Gudrun rode home after that. But when Kjartan Olafson hears of these tidings he rides off with twelve men, and came to Tongue early one day. Thorarin greeted him well, and asked him to stay there. Kjartan said he must ride back again in the morning, but would tarry there for some time. Thorarin asked his errand, and Kjartan said, "My errand here is to speak about a certain sale of land that you and Bolli have agreed upon, for it is very much against my wishes if you sell this land to Bolli and Gudrun." Thorarin said that to do otherwise would be unbecoming to him, "For the price that Bolli has offered for the land is liberal, and is to be paid up speedily." Kjartan said, "You shall come in for no loss even if Bolli does not buy your land; for I will buy it at the same price, and it will not be of much avail to you to speak against what I have made up my mind to have done. Indeed it will soon be found out that I shall want to have the most to say within this countryside, being more ready, however, to do the will of others than that of the men of Laugar." Thorarin answered, "Mighty to me will be the master's word in this matter, but it would be most to my mind that this bargain should be left alone as I and Bolli have settled it." Kjartan said, "I do not call that a sale of land which is not bound by witnesses. Now you do one of two things, either sell me the lands on the same terms as you agreed upon with the others, or live on your land yourself." Thorarin chooses to sell him the land, and witnesses were forthwith taken to the sale, and after the purchase Kjartan rode home. That same evening this was told at Laugar. Then Gudrun said, "It seems to me, Bolli, that Kjartan has given you two choices somewhat harder than those he gave Thorarin—that you must either leave the countryside with little honour, or show yourself at some meeting with him a good deal less slow than you have been heretofore." Bolli did not answer, but went forthwith away from this talk. All was quiet now through-

out what was left of Lent. The third day after Easter Kjartan rode from home with one other man, on the beach, for a follower. They came to Tongue in the day. Kjartan wished Thorarin to ride with them to Saurby to gather in debts due to him, for Kjartan had much money-at-call in these parts. But Thorarin had ridden to another place. Kjartan stopped there awhile, and waited for him. That same day Thorhalla the Chatterbox was come there. She asked Kjartan where he was minded to go. He said he was going west to Saurby. She asked, "Which road will you take?" Kjartan replied, "I am going by Sælingsdale to the west, and by Swinedale from the west." She asked how long he would be. Kjartan answered, "Most likely I shall be riding from the west next Thursday (the fifth day of the week)." "Would you do an errand for me?" said Thorhalla. "I have a kinsman west at Whitedale and Saurby; he has promised me half a mark's worth of homespun, and I would like you to claim it for me, and bring it with you from the west." Kjartan promised to do this. After this Thorarin came home, and betook himself to the journey with them. They rode westward over Sælingsdale heath, and came to Hol in the evening to the brothers and sister there. There Kjartan got the best of welcomes, for between him and them there was the greatest friendship. Thorhalla the Chatterbox came home to Laugar that evening. The sons of Osvif asked her who she had met during the day. She said she had met Kjartan Olafson. They asked where he was going. She answered, telling them all she knew about it, "And never has he looked braver than now, and it is not wonderful at all that such men should look upon everything as low beside themselves;" and Thorhalla still went on, "and it was clear to me that Kjartan liked to talk of nothing so well as of his land bargain with Thorarin." Gudrun spoke, "Kjartan may well do things as boldly as it pleases him, for it is proven that for whatever insult he may pay others, there is none who dares even to shoot a shaft at him." Present at this talk of Gudrun and Thorhalla were both Bolli and the sons of Osvif. Ospak and his brothers said but little, but what there was, rather stinging for Kjartan, as was always their way. Bolli behaved as if he did not hear, as he always did when Kjartan was spoken ill of, for his wont was either to hold his peace, or to gainsay them.

Chap. XLVIII: The Men of Laugar and Gudrun plan an Ambush for Kjartan, A.D. 1003

Kjartan spent the fourth day after Easter at Hol, and there was the greatest merriment and gaiety. The night after An was very ill at ease in his sleep, so they waked him. They asked him what he had dreamt. He answered, "A woman came to me most evil-looking and pulled me forth unto the bedside. She had in one hand a short sword, and in the other a trough; she drove the sword into my breast and cut open all the belly, and took out all my inwards and put brushwood in their place. After that she went outside." Kjartan and the others laughed very much at this dream, and said he should be called An 'brushwood belly,' and they caught hold of him and said they wished to feel if he had the brushwood in his stomach. Then Aud said, "There is no need to mock so much at this; and my counsel is that Kjartan do one of two things: either tarry here longer, or, if he will ride away, then let him ride with more followers hence than hither he did." Kjartan said, "You may hold An 'brushwood belly' a man very sage as he sits and talks to you all day, since you think that whatever he dreams must be a very vision, but go I must, as I have already made up my mind to, in spite of this dream." Kjartan got ready to go on the fifth day in Easter week; and at the advice of Aud, so did Thorkell Whelp and Knut his brother. They rode on the way with Kjartan a band of twelve together. Kjartan came to Whitedale and fetched the homespun for Thorhalla Chatterbox as he had said he would. After that he rode south through Swinedale. It is told how at Laugar in Sælingsdale Gudrun was early afoot directly after sunrise. She went to where her brothers were sleeping. She roused Ospak and he woke up at once, and then too the other brothers. And when Ospak saw that there was his sister, he asked her what she wanted that she was up so early. Gudrun said she wanted to know what they would be doing that day. Ospak said he would keep at rest, "for there is little work to do." Gudrun said, "You would have the

right sort of temper if you were the daughters of some peasant, letting neither good nor bad be done by you. Why, after all the disgrace and shame that Kjartan has done to you, you none the less lie quietly sleeping, though he rides past this place with but one other man. Such men indeed are richly endowed with the memory of swine. I think it is past hoping that you will ever have courage enough to go and seek out Kjartan in his home, if you dare not meet him now that he rides with but one other man or two; but here you sit at home and bear yourselves as if you were hopeful men; yea, in sooth there are too many of you." Ospak said she did not mince matters and it was hard to gainsay her, and he sprang up forthwith and dressed, as did also each of the brothers one after the other. Then they got ready to lay an ambush for Kjartan. Then Gudrun called on Bolli to bestir him with them. Bolli said it behoved him not for the sake of his kinship with Kjartan, set forth how lovingly Olaf had brought him up. Gudrun answered, "Therein you speak the truth, but you will not have the good luck always to do what pleases all men, and if you cut yourself out of this journey, our married life must be at an end." And through Gudrun's harping on the matter Bolli's mind swelled at all the enmity and guilts that lay at the door of Kjartan, and speedily he donned his weapons, and they grew a band of nine together. There were the five sons of Osvif—Ospak, Helgi, Vandrad, Torrad, and Thorolf. Bolli was the sixth and Gudlaug, the son of Osvif's sister, the hopefullest of men, the seventh. There were also Odd and Stein, sons of Thorhalla Chatterbox. They rode to Swinedale and took up their stand beside the gill which is called Goat-gill. They bound up their horses and sat down. Bolli was silent all day, and lay up on the top of the gill bank. Now when Kjartan and his followers were come south past Narrowsound, where the dale begins to widen out, Kjartan said that Thorkell and the others had better turn back. Thorkell said they would ride to the end of the dale. Then when they came south past the out-dairies called Northdairies Kjartan spake to the brothers and bade them not to ride any farther. "Thorolf the thief," he said, "shall not have that matter to laugh at that I dare not ride on my way with few men." Thorkell Whelp said, "We will yield to you in not following you any farther; but we should rue it indeed not to be near if you should stand in need of men to-day." Then Kjartan said, "Never will Bolli, my kinsman, join hands with plotters against my life. But if the sons of Osvif lie in wait for me, there is no knowing which side will live to tell the tale, even though I may have some odds to deal with." Thereupon the brothers rode back to the west.

Chap. XLIX: The Death of Kjartan

Now Kjartan rode south through the dale, he and they three together, himself, An the Black, and Thorarin. Thorkell was the name of a man who lived at Goat-peaks in Swinedale, where now there is waste land. He had been seeing after his horses that day, and a shepherd of his with him. They saw the two parties, the men of Laugar in ambush and Kjartan and his where they were riding down the dale three together. Then the shepherd said they had better turn to meet Kjartan and his; it would be, quoth he, a great good hap to them if they could stave off so great a trouble as now both sides were steering into. Thorkell said, "Hold your tongue at once. Do you think, fool as you are, you will ever give life to a man to whom fate has ordained death? And, truth to tell, I would spare neither of them from having now as evil dealings together as they like. It seems to me a better plan for us to get to a place where we stand in danger of nothing, and from where we can have a good look at their meeting, so as to have some fun over their play. For all men make a marvel thereof, how Kjartan is of all men the best skilled at arms. I think he will want it now, for we two know how overwhelming the odds are." And so it had to be as Thorkell wished. Kjartan and his followers now rode on to Goat-gill. On the other hand the sons of Osvif misdoubt them why Bolli should have sought out a place for himself from where he might well be seen by men riding from the west. So they now put their heads together, and, being of one mind that Bolli was playing them false, they go for him up unto the brink and took to wrestling and horse-playing with him, and took him by the feet and dragged him down over the brink. But Kjartan and his followers came up

apace as they were riding fast, and when they came to the south side of the gill they saw the ambush and knew the men. Kjartan at once sprung off his horse and turned upon the sons of Osvif. There stood near by a great stone, against which Kjartan ordered they should wait the onset (he and his). Before they met Kjartan flung his spear, and it struck through Thorolf's shield above the handle, so that therewith the shield was pressed against him, the spear piercing the shield and the arm above the elbow, where it sundered the main muscle, Thorolf dropping the shield, and his arm being of no avail to him through the day. Thereupon Kjartan drew his sword, but he held not the "King's-gift." The sons of Thorhalla went at Thorarin, for that was the task allotted to them. That outset was a hard one, for Thorarin was mightily strong, and it was hard to tell which would outlast the other. Osvif's sons and Gudlaug set on Kjartan, they being five together, and Kjartan and An but two. An warded himself valiantly, and would ever be going in front of Kjartan. Bolli stood aloof with Footbiter. Kjartan smote hard, but his sword was of little avail (and bent so), he often had to straighten it under his foot. In this attack both the sons of Osvif and An were wounded, but Kjartan had no wound as yet. Kjartan fought so swiftly and dauntlessly that Osvif's sons recoiled and turned to where An was. At that moment An fell, having fought for some time, with his inwards coming out. In this attack Kjartan cut off one leg of Gudlaug above the knee, and that hurt was enough to cause death. Then the four sons of Osvif made an onset on Kjartan, but he warded himself so bravely that in no way did he give them the chance of any advantage. Then spake Kjartan, "Kinsman Bolli, why did you leave home if you meant quietly to stand by? Now the choice lies before you, to help one side or the other, and try now how Footbiter will do." Bolli made as if he did not hear. And when Ospak saw that they would no how bear Kjartan over, he egged on Bolli in every way, and said he surely would not wish that shame to follow after him, to have promised them his aid in this fight and not to grant it now. "Why, heavy enough in dealings with us was Kjartan then, when by none so big a deed as this we had offended him; but if Kjartan is now to get away from us, then for you, Bolli, as even for us, the way to exceeding hardships will be equally short." Then Bolli drew Footbiter, and now turned upon Kjartan. Then Kjartan said to Bolli, "Surely thou art minded now, my kinsman, to do a dastard's deed; but oh, my kinsman, I am much more fain to take my death from you than to cause the same to you myself." Then Kjartan flung away his weapons and would defend himself no longer; yet he was but slightly wounded, though very tired with fighting. Bolli gave no answer to Kjartan's words, but all the same he dealt him his death-wound. And straightway Bolli sat down under the shoulders of him, and Kjartan breathed his last in the lap of Bolli. Bolli rued at once his deed, and declared the manslaughter due to his hand. Bolli sent the sons of Osvif into the countryside, but he stayed behind together with Thorarin by the dead bodies. And when the sons of Osvif came to Laugar they told the tidings. Gudrun gave out her pleasure thereat, and then the arm of Thorolf was bound up; it healed slowly, and was never after any use to him. The body of Kjartan was brought home to Tongue, but Bolli rode home to Laugar. Gudrun went to meet him, and asked what time of day it was. Bolli said it was near noontide. Then spake Gudrun, "Harm spurs on to hard deeds (work); I have spun yarn for twelve ells of homespun, and you have killed Kjartan." Bolli replied, "That unhappy deed might well go late from my mind even if you did not remind me of it." Gudrun said "Such things I do not count among mishaps. It seemed to me you stood in higher station during the year Kjartan was in Norway than now, when he trod you under foot when he came back to Iceland. But I count that last which to me is dearest, that Hrefna will not go laughing to her bed to-night." Then Bolli said and right wroth he was, "I think it is quite uncertain that she will turn paler at these tidings than you do; and I have my doubts as to whether you would not have been less startled if I had been lying behind on the field of battle, and Kjartan had told the tidings." Gudrun saw that Bolli was wroth, and spake, "Do not upbraid me with such things, for I am very grateful to you for your deed; for now I think I know that you will not do anything against my mind." After that Osvif's sons went and hid in an underground chamber, which had been made for them in secret, but Thorhalla's

sons were sent west to Holy-Fell to tell Snorri Godi the Priest these tidings, and therewith the message that they bade him send them speedily all availing strength against Olaf and those men to whom it came to follow up the blood-suit after Kjartan. At Sælingsdale Tongue it happened, the night after the day on which the fight befell, that An sat up, he who they had all thought was dead. Those who waked the bodies were very much afraid, and thought this a wondrous marvel. Then An spake to them, "I beg you, in God's name, not to be afraid of me, for I have had both my life and my wits all unto the hour when on me fell the heaviness of a swoon. Then I dreamed of the same woman as before, and methought she now took the brushwood out of my belly and put my own inwards in instead, and the change seemed good to me." Then the wounds that An had were bound up and he became a hale man, and was ever afterwards called An Brushwood-belly. But now when Olaf Hoskuld's son heard these tidings he took the slaying of Kjartan most sorely to heart, though he bore it like a brave man. His sons wanted to set on Bolli forthwith and kill him. Olaf said, "Far be it from me, for my son is none the more atoned to me though Bolli be slain; moreover, I loved Kjartan before all men, but as to Bolli, I could not bear any harm befalling him. But I see a more befitting business for you to do. Go ye and meet the sons of Thorhalla, who are now sent to Holy-Fell with the errand of summoning up a band against us. I shall be well pleased for you to put them to any penalty you like." Then Olaf's sons swiftly turn to journeying, and went on board a ferry-boat that Olaf owned, being seven of them together, and rowed out down Hvamsfirth, pushing on their journey at their lustiest. They had but little wind, but fair what there was, and they rowed with the sail until they came under Scoreisle, where they tarried for some while and asked about the journeyings of men thereabouts. A little while after they saw a ship coming from the west across the firth, and soon they saw who the men were, for there were the sons of Thorhalla, and Hall-dor and his followers boarded them straightway. They met with no resistance, for the sons of Olaf leapt forthwith on board their ships and set upon them. Stein and his brother were laid hands on and beheaded overboard. The sons of Olaf now turn back, and their journey was deemed to have sped most briskly.

Chap. I: The End of Hrefna. The Peace Settled, A.D. 1003

Olaf went to meet Kjartan's body. He sent men south to Burg to tell Thorstein Egilson these tidings, and also that he would have his help for the blood-suit; and if any great men should band themselves together against him with the sons of Osvif, he said he wanted to have the whole matter in his own hands. The same message he sent north to Willowdale, to Gudmund, his son-in-law, and to the sons of Asgeir; with the further information that he had charged as guilty of the slaying of Kjartan all the men who had taken part in the ambush, except Ospak, son of Osvif, for he was already under outlawry because of a woman who was called Aldis, the daughter of Holmganga-Ljot of Ingjaldsand. Their son was Ulf, who later became a marshal to King Harold Sigurdsson, and had for wife Jorunn, the daughter of Thorberg. Their son was Jon, father of Erlend the Laggard, the father of Archbishop Egstein. Olaf had proclaimed that the blood-suit should be taken into court at Thorness Thing. He had Kjartan's body brought home, and a tent was rigged over it, for there was as yet no church built in the Dales. But when Olaf heard that Thorstein had bestirred him swiftly and raised up a band of great many men, and that the Willowdale men had done likewise, he had men gathered together throughout all the Dales, and a great multitude they were. The whole of this band Olaf sent to Laugar, with this order: "It is my will that you guard Bolli if he stand in need thereof, and do it no less faithfully than if you were following me; for my mind misgives me that the men from beyond this countryside, whom, coming soon, we shall be having on our hands, will deem that they have somewhat of a loss to make up with Bolli. And when he had put the matter in order in this manner, Thorstein, with his following, and also the Willowdale men, came on, all wild with rage. Hall Gudmund's son and Kalf Asgeirson egged them on most to go and force Bolli to let search be made for the sons of Osvif till

they should be found, for they could be gone nowhere out of the countryside. But because Olaf set himself so much against their making a raid on Laugar, messages of peace were borne between the two parties, and Bolli was most willing, and bade Olaf settle all terms on his behalf, and Osvif said it was not in his power to speak against this, for no help had come to him from Snorri the Priest. A peace meeting, therefore, took place at Lea-Shaws, and the whole case was laid freely in Olaf's hand. For the slaughter of Kjartan there were to come such fines and penalties as Olaf liked. Then the peace meeting came to an end. Bolli, by the counsel of Olaf, did not go to this meeting. The award should be made known at Thorness Thing. Now the Mere-men and Willowdale men rode to Herdholt. Thorstein Kuggison begged for Asgeir, son of Kjartan, to foster, as a comfort to Hrefna. Hrefna went north with her brothers, and was much weighed down with grief, nevertheless she bore her sorrow with dignity, and was easy of speech with every man. Hrefna took no other husband after Kjartan. She lived but a little while after coming to the north; and the tale goes that she died of a broken heart.

Chap. LI: Osvif's Sons are Banished

Kjartan's body lay in state for a week in Herdholt. Thorstein Egilson had had a church built at Burg. He took the body of Kjartan home with him, and Kjartan was buried at Burg. The church was newly consecrated, and as yet hung in white. Now time wore on towards the Thorness Thing, and the award was given against Osvif's sons, who were all banished the country. Money was given to pay the cost of their going into exile, but they were forbidden to come back to Iceland so long as any of Olaf's sons, or Asgeir, Kjartan's son, should be alive. For Gudlaug, the son of Osvif's sister, no weregild (atonement) should be paid, because of his having set out against, and laid ambush for, Kjartan, neither should Thorolf have any compensation for the wounds he had got. Olaf would not let Bolli be prosecuted, and bade him ransom himself with a money fine. This Hall-dor and Stein, and all the sons of Olaf, liked mightily ill, and said it would go hard with Bolli if he was allowed to stay in the same countryside as themselves. Olaf saw that would work well enough as long as he was on his legs. There was a ship in Bjornhaven which belonged to Audun Cable-hound. He was at the Thing, and said, "As matters stand, the guilt of these men will be no less in Norway, so long as any of Kjartan's friends are alive." Then Osvif said, "You, Cable-hound, will be no soothsayer in this matter, for my sons will be highly accounted of among men of high degree, whilst you, Cable-hound, will pass, this summer, into the power of trolls." Audun Cable-hound went out a voyage that summer and the ship was wrecked amongst the Faroe Isles and every man's child on board perished, and Osvif's prophecy was thought to have come thoroughly home. The sons of Osvif went abroad that summer, and none ever came back again. In such a manner the blood-suit came to an end that Olaf was held to have shown himself all the greater a man, because where it was due, in the case of the sons of Osvif, to wit, he drove matters home to the very bone, but spared Bolli for the sake of their kinship. Olaf thanked men well for the help they had afforded him. By Olaf's counsel Bolli bought the land at Tongue. It is told that Olaf lived three winters after Kjartan was slain. After he was dead his sons shared the inheritance he left behind. Hall-dor took over the manor of Herdholt. Thorgerd, their mother, lived with Hall-dor; she was most hatefully-minded towards Bolli, and thought the reward he paid for his fostering a bitter one.

Chap. LII: The Killing of Thorkell of Goat's Peak

In the spring Bolli and Gudrun set up householding at Sælingsdale-Tongue, and it soon became a stately one. Bolli and Gudrun begat a son. To that boy a name was given, and he was called Thorleik; he was early a very fine lad, and a right nimble one. Hall-dor Olafson lived at Herdholt, as has before been written, and he was in most matters at the head of his brothers. The spring that Kjartan was slain Thorgerd Egil's daughter placed a lad, as kin to her, with Thorkell of Goat-Peaks, and the lad herded sheep there through the summer. Like other people he was much grieved

over Kjartan's death. He could never speak of Kjartan if Thorkell was near, for he always spoke ill of him, and said he had been a "white" man and of no heart; he often mimicked how Kjartan had taken his death-wound. The lad took this very ill, and went to Herdholt and told Halldor and Thorgerd and begged them to take him in. Thorgerd bade him remain in his service till the winter. The lad said he had no strength to bear being there any longer. "And you would not ask this of me if you knew what heart-burn I suffer from all this." Then Thorgerd's heart turned at the tale of his grief, and she said that as far as she was concerned, she would make a place for him there. Halldor said, "Give no heed to this lad, he is not worth taking in earnest." Then Thorgerd answered, "The lad is of little account," says she, "but Thorkell has behaved evilly in every way in this matter, for he knew of the ambush the men of Laugar laid for Kjartan, and would not warn him, but made fun and sport of their dealings together, and has since said many unfriendly things about the matter; but it seems a matter far beyond you brothers ever to seek revenge where odds are against you, now that you cannot pay out for their doings such scoundrels as Thorkell is." Halldor answered little to that, but bade Thorgerd do what she liked about the lad's service. A few days after Halldor rode from home, he and sundry other men together. He went to Goat-Peaks, and surrounded Thorkell's house. Thorkell was led out and slain, and he met his death with the utmost cowardice. Halldor allowed no plunder, and they went home when this was done. Thorgerd was well pleased over this deed, and thought this reminder better than none. That summer all was quiet, so to speak, and yet there was the greatest ill-will between the sons of Olaf and Bolli. The brothers bore themselves in the most unyielding manner towards Bolli, while he gave in to his kinsmen in all matters as long as he did not lower himself in any way by so doing, for he was a very proud man. Bolli had many followers and lived richly, for there was no lack of money. Steinthor, Olaf's son, lived in Danastead in Salmon-river-Dale. He had for wife Thurid, Asgeir's daughter, who had before been married to Thorkell Kuggi. Their son was Steinthor, who was called "Stone-grig."

Chap. LIII: Thorgerd's Egging, A.D. 1007

The next winter after the death of Olaf Hoskuldson, Thorgerd, Egil's daughter, sent word to her son Steinthor that he should come and meet her. When the mother and son met she told him she wished to go up west to Saurby, and see her friend Aud. She told Halldor to come too. They were five together, and Halldor followed his mother. They went on till they came to a place in front of the homestead of Sælingsdale Tongue. Then Thorgerd turned her horse towards the house and asked, "What is this place called?" Halldor answered, "You ask this, mother, not because you don't know it. This place is called Tongue." "Who lives here?" said she. He answered, "You know that, mother." Thorgerd said and snorted, "I know that well enough," she said. "Here lives Bolli, the slayer of your brother, and marvellously unlike your noble kindred you turn out in that you will not avenge such a brother as Kjartan was; never would Egil, your mother's father, have behaved in such a manner; and a piteous thing it is to have dolts for sons; indeed, I think it would have suited you better if you had been your father's daughter and had married. For here, Halldor, it comes to the old saw: 'No stock without a dufer,' and this is the ill-luck of Olaf I see most clearly, how he blundered in begetting his sons. This I would bring home to you, Halldor," says she, "because you look upon yourself as being the foremost among your brothers. Now we will turn back again, for all my errand here was to put you in mind of this, lest you should have forgotten it already." Then Halldor answered, "We shall not put it down as your fault, mother, if this should slip out of our minds." By way of answer Halldor had few words to say about this, but his heart swelled with wrath towards Bolli. The winter now passed and summer came, and time glided on towards the Thing. Halldor and his brothers made it known that they will ride to the Thing. They rode with a great company, and set up the booth Olaf had owned. The Thing was quiet, and no tidings to tell of it. There were at the Thing from the north the Willowdale men, the sons of Gudmund Solmundson. Bardi Gudmundson was then eighteen winters old;

he was a great and strong man. The sons of Olaf asked Bardi, their nephew, to go home with them, and added many pressing words to the invitation. Hall, the son of Gudmund, was not in Iceland then. Bardi took up their bidding gladly, for there was much love between those kinsmen. Bardi rode west from the Thing with the sons of Olaf. They came home to Herdholt, and Bardi tarried the rest of the summer time.

Chap. LIV: Halldor prepares to avenge Kjartan

Now Halldor told Bardi in secret that the brothers had made up their minds to set on Bolli, for they could no longer withstand the taunts of their mother. "And we will not conceal from you, kinsman Bardi, that what mostly lay behind the invitation to you was this, that we wished to have your help and fellowship." Then Bardi answered, "That will be a matter ill spoken of, to break the peace on one's own kinsmen, and on the other hand it seems to me nowise an easy thing to set on Bolli. He has many men about him and is himself the best of fighters, and is not at a loss for wise counsel with Gudrun and Osvif at his side. Taking all these matters together they seem to me nowise easy to overcome." Halldor said, "There are things we stand more in need of than to make the most of the difficulties of this affair. Nor have I broached it till I knew that it must come to pass, that we make earnest of wreaking revenge on Bolli. And I hope, kinsman, you will not withdraw from doing this journey with us." Bardi answered, "I know you do not think it likely that I will draw back, neither do I desire to do so if I see that I cannot get you to give it up yourselves." "There you do your share in the matter honourably," said Halldor, "as was to be looked for from you." Bardi said they must set about it with care. Halldor said he had heard that Bolli had sent his house-carles from home, some north to Ramfirth to meet a ship and some out to Middlefell strand. "It is also told me that Bolli is staying at the out-dairy in Sælingsdale with no more than the house-carles who are doing the haymaking. And it seems to me we shall never have a better chance of seeking a meeting with Bolli than now." So this then Halldor and Bardi settled between them. There was a man named Thorstein the Black, a wise man and wealthy; he lived at Hundidale in the Broadfirth-Dales; he had long been a friend of Olaf Peacock's. A sister of Thorstein was called Solveig; she was married to a man who was named Helgi, who was son of Hardbein. Helgi was a very tall and strong man, and a great sailor; he had lately come to Iceland, and was staying with his brother-in-law Thorstein. Halldor sent word to Thorstein the Black and Helgi his brother-in-law, and when they were come to Herdholt Halldor told them what he was about, and how he meant to carry it out, and asked them to join in the journey with him. Thorstein showed an utter dislike of this undertaking, saying, "It is the most heinous thing that you kinsmen should go on killing each other off like that; and now there are but few men left in your family equal to Bolli." But though Thorstein spoke in this wise it went for nought. Halldor sent word to Lambi, his father's brother, and when he came and met Halldor he told him what he was about, and Lambi urged hard that this should be carried out. Goodwife Thorgerd also egged them on eagerly to make an earnest of their journey, and said she should never look upon Kjartan as avenged until Bolli paid for him with his life. After this they got ready for the journey. In this raid there were the four sons of Olaf and the fifth was Bardi. There were the sons of Olaf, Halldor, Steinthor, Helgi, and Hoskuld, but Bardi was Gudmund's son. Lambi was the sixth, the seventh was Thorstein, and the eighth Helgi, his brother-in-law, the ninth An Brushwood-belly. Thorgerd took herself also to the raid with them; but they set themselves against it, and said that such were no journeys for women. She said she would go indeed, "For so much I know of you, my sons, that whetting is what you want." They said she must have her own way.

Chap. LV: The Death of Bolli

After that they rode away from home out of Herdholt, the nine of them together, Thorgerd making the tenth. They rode up along the foreshore and so to Lea-shaws during the early part of the night. They did not stop before they got to Sælingsdale in the early

morning tide. There was a thick wood in the valley at that time. Bolli was there in the out-dairy, as Halldor had heard. The dairy stood near the river at the place now called Bolli's-tofts. Above the dairy there is a large hill-rise stretching all the way down to Stack-gill. Between the mountain slope above and the hill-rise there is a wide meadow called Barni; it was there Bolli's house-carles were working. Halldor and his companions rode across Ran-meads unto Oxgrove, and thence above Hammer-Meadow, which was right against the dairy. They knew there were many men at the dairy, so they got off their horses with a view to bidding the time when the men should leave the dairy for their work. Bolli's shepherd went early that morning after the flocks up into the mountain side, and from there he saw the men in the wood as well as the horses tied up, and misdoubted that those who went on the sly in this manner would be no men of peace. So forthwith he makes for the dairy by the straightest cut in order to tell Bolli that men were come there. Halldor was a man of keen sight. He saw how that a man was running down the mountain side and making for the dairy. He said to his companions that "That must surely be Bolli's shepherd, and he must have seen our coming; so we must go and meet him, and let him take no news to the dairy." They did as he bade them. An Brushwood-belly went the fastest of them and overtook the man, picked him up, and flung him down. Such was that fall that the lad's back-bone was broken. After that they rode to the dairy. Now the dairy was divided into two parts, the sleeping-room and the byre. Bolli had been early afoot in the morning ordering the men to their work, and had lain down again to sleep when the house-carles went away. In the dairy therefore there were left the two, Gudrun and Bolli. They awoke with the din when they got off their horses, and they also heard them talking as to who should first go on to the dairy to set on Bolli. Bolli knew the voice of Halldor, as well as that of sundry more of his followers. Bolli spoke to Gudrun, and bade her leave the dairy and go away, and said that their meeting would not be such as would afford her much pastime. Gudrun said she thought such things alone would befall there worthy of tidings as she might be allowed to look upon, and held that she would be of no hurt to Bolli by taking her stand near to him. Bolli said that in this matter he would have his way, and so it was that Gudrun went out of the dairy; she went down over the brink to a brook that ran there, and began to wash some linen. Bolli was now alone in the dairy; he took his weapon, set his helm on his head, held a shield before him, and had his sword, Footbiter, in his hand: he had no mail coat. Halldor and his followers were talking to each other outside as to how they should set to work, for no one was very eager to go into the dairy. Then said An Brushwood-belly, "There are men here in this train nearer in kinship to Kjartan than I am, but not one there will be in whose mind abides more steadfastly than in mine the event when Kjartan lost his life. When I was being brought more dead than alive home to Tongue, and Kjartan lay slain, my one thought was that I would gladly do Bolli some harm whenever I should get the chance. So I shall be the first to go into the dairy." Then Thorstein the Black answered, "Most valiantly is that spoken; but it would be wiser not to plunge headlong beyond heed, so let us go warily now, for Bolli will not be standing quiet when he is beset; and however underhanded he may be where he is, you may make up your mind for a brisk defence on his part, strong and skilled at arms as he is. He also has a sword that for a weapon is a trusty one." Then An went into the dairy hard and swift, and held his shield over his head, turning forward the narrower part of it. Bolli dealt him a blow with Footbiter, and cut off the tail-end of the shield, and clove An through the head down to the shoulder, and forthwith he gat his death. Then Lambi went in; he held his shield before him, and a drawn sword in his hand. In the nick of time Bolli pulled Footbiter out of the wound, wherewith his shield veered aside so as to lay him open to attack. So Lambi made a thrust at him in the thigh, and a great wound that was. Bolli hewed in return, and struck Lambi's shoulder, and the sword flew down along the side of him, and he was rendered forthwith unfit to fight, and never after that time for the rest of his life was his arm any more use to him. At this brunt Helgi, the son of Hard-bien, rushed in with a spear, the head of which was an ell long, and the shaft bound with iron. When Bolli saw that he cast away his

sword, and took his shield in both hands, and went towards the dairy door to meet Helgi. Helgi thrust at Bolli with the spear right through the shield and through him. Now Bolli leaned up against the dairy wall, and the men rushed into the dairy, Halldor and his brothers, to wit, and Thorgerd went into the dairy as well. Then spoke Bolli, "Now it is safe, brothers, to come nearer than hitherto you have done," and said he weened that defence now would be but short. Thorgerd answered his speech, and said there was no need to shrink from dealing unflinchingly with Bolli, and bade them "walk between head and trunk." Bolli stood still against the dairy wall, and held tight to him his kirtle lest his inside should come out. Then Steinthor Olafson leapt at Bolli, and hewed at his neck with a large axe just above his shoulders, and forthwith his head flew off. Thorgerd bade him "hale enjoy hands," and said that Gudrun would have now a while a red hair to trim for Bolli. After that they went out of the dairy. Gudrun now came up from the brook, and spoke to Halldor, and asked for tidings of what had befallen in their dealings with Bolli. They told her all that had happened. Gudrun was dressed in a kirtle of "rám"-stuff, and a tight-fitting woven bodice, a high bent coif on her head, and she had tied a scarf round her with dark-blue stripes, and fringed at the ends. Helgi Hardbienson went up to Gudrun, and caught hold of the scarf end, and wiped the blood off the spear with it, the same spear with which he had thrust Bolli through. Gudrun glanced at him and smiled slightly. Then Halldor said, "That was blackguardly and gruesomely done." Helgi bade him not be angry about it, "For I am minded to think that under this scarf end abides undoer of my life." Then they took their horses and rode away. Gudrun went along with them talking with them for a while, and then she turned back.

Chap. LVI: Bolli Bollison is born, A.D. 1008

The followers of Halldor now fell a-talking how that Gudrun must think but little of the slaying of Bolli, since she had seen them off chatting and talked to them altogether as if they had done nothing that she might take to heart. Then Halldor answered, "That is not my feeling, that Gudrun thinks little of Bolli's death; I think the reason of her seeing us off with a chat was far rather, that she wanted to gain a thorough knowledge as to who the men were who had partaken in this journey. Nor is it too much said of Gudrun that in all mettle of mind and heart she is far above other women. Indeed, it is only what might be looked for that Gudrun should take sorely to heart the death of Bolli, for, truth to tell, in such men as was Bolli there is the greatest loss, though we kinsmen, bore not about the good luck to live in peace together." After that they rode home to Herdholt. These tidings spread quickly far and wide and were thought startling, and at Bolli's death there was the greatest grief. Gudrun sent straightway men to Snorri the Priest, for Osvif and she thought that all their trust was where Snorri was. Snorri started quickly at the bidding of Gudrun and came to Tongue with sixty men, and a great ease to Gudrun's heart his coming was. He offered her to try to bring about a peaceful settlement, but Gudrun was but little minded on behalf of Thorleik to agree to taking money for the slaughter of Bolli. "It seems to me, Snorri, that the best help you can afford me," she said, "is to exchange dwellings with me, so that I be not next-door neighbour to the Herdholtings." At that time Snorri had great quarrels with the dwellers at Eyr, but said he would do this for the sake of his friendship with Gudrun. "Yet, Gudrun, you will have to stay on this year at Tongue." Snorri then made ready to go away, and Gudrun gave him honourable gifts. And now Snorri rides away, and things went pretty quietly on that year. The next winter after the killing of Bolli Gudrun gave birth to a child; it was a male, and he was named Bolli. He was at an early age both big and goodly, and Gudrun loved him very much. Now as the winter passed by and the spring came the bargain took place which had been bespoken in that Snorri and Gudrun changed lands. Snorri went to Tongue and lived there for the rest of his life, and Gudrun went to Holyfell, she and Osvif, and there they set up a stately house. There Thorleik and Bolli, the sons of Gudrun, grew up. Thorleik was four years old at the time when Bolli his father was slain.

Chap. LVII: About Thorgils Hallason, A.D. 1018

There was a man named Thorgils Hallason; he was known by his mother's name, as she lived longer than his father, whose name was Snorri, son of Alf o' Dales. Halla, Thorgil's mother, was daughter of Gest Oddlifson. Thorgils lived in Horddale at a place called Tongue. Thorgils was a man great and goodly of body, the greatest swaggerer, and was spoken of as one of no fairness in dealings with men. Between him and Snorri the Priest there was often little love lost, for Snorri found Thorgils both meddlesome and flaunting of demeanour. Thorgils would get up many errands on which to go west into the countryside, and always came to Holyfell offering Gudrun to look after her affairs, but she only took the matter quietly and made but little of it all. Thorgils asked for her son Thorleik to go home with him, and he stayed for the most part at Tongue and learnt law from Thorgils, for he was a man most skilled in law-craft. At that time Thorkell Eyjolfson was busy in trading journeys; he was a most renowned man, and of high birth, and withal a great friend of Snorri the Priest. He would always be staying with Thorstein Kuggisson, his kinsman, when he was out here (in Iceland). Now, one time when Thorkell had a ship standing up in Vadil, on Bardistrand, it befell, in Burgfirth, that the son of Eid of Ridge was killed by the sons of Helga from Kropp. Grim was the name of the man who had done the manslaughter, and that of his brother was Nial, who was drowned in White-river; a little later on Grim was outlawed to the woods because of the manslaughter, and he lay out in the mountains whilst he was under the award of outlawry. He was a great man and strong. Eid was then very old when this happened, so the case was not followed up. People blamed Thorkell very much that he did not see matters righted. The next spring when Thorkell had got his ship ready he went south across Broadfirth-country, and got a horse there and rode alone, not stopping in his journey till he got as far as Ridge, to Eid, his kinsman. Eid took him in joyfully. Thorkell told him his errand, how that he would go and find Grim his outlaw, and asked Eid if he knew at all where his lair was. Eid answered, "I am nowise eager for this; it seems to me you have much to risk as to how the journey may speed, seeing that you will have to deal with a man of Hel's strength, such as Grim. But if you will go, then start with many men, so that you may have it all your own way." "That to me is no prowess," said Thorkell, "to draw together a great company against one man. But what I wish is, that you would lend me the sword Skofnung, for then I ween I shall be able to overcome a mere runagate, be he never so mighty a man of his hands." "You must have your way in this," said Eid, "but it will not come to me unawares, if, some day, you should come to rue this wilfulness. But inasmuch as you will have it that you are doing this for my sake, what you ask for shall not be withheld, for I think Skofnung well bestowed if you bear it. But the nature of the sword is such that the sun must not shine upon its hilt, nor must it be drawn if a woman should be near. If a man be wounded by the sword the hurt may not be healed, unless the healing-stone that goes with the sword be rubbed thereon." Thorkell said he would pay careful heed to this, and takes over the sword, asking Eid to point out to him the way to where Grim might have his lair. Eid said he was most minded to think that Grim had his lair north on Twodays-Heath by the Fishwaters. Then Thorkell rode northward upon the heath the way which Eid did point out to him, and when he had got a long way onward over the heath he saw near some great water a hut, and makes his way for it.

Chap. LVIII: Thorkell and Grim, and their Voyage Abroad

Thorkell now comes to the hut, he sees where a man is sitting by the water at the mouth of a brook, where he was line-fishing, and had a cloak over his head. Thorkell leapt off his horse and tied it up under the wall of the hut. Then he walks down to the water to where the man was sitting. Grim saw the shadow of a man cast on the water, and springs up at once. By then Thorkell had got very nearly close up to him, and strikes at him. The blow caught him on his arm just above the wolf-joint (the wrist), but that was not a great wound. Grim sprang forthwith upon Thorkell, and

they seized each other wrestling-wise, and speedily the odds of strength told, and Thorkell fell and Grim on the top of him. Then Grim asked who this man might be. Thorkell said that did not at all matter to him. Grim said, "Now things have befallen otherwise than you must have thought they would, for now your life will be in my power." Thorkell said he would not pray for peace for himself, "for lucklessly I have taken this in hand." Grim said he had had enough mishaps for him to give this one the slip, "for to you some other fate is ordained than that of dying at this our meeting, and I shall give you your life, while you repay me in whatever kind you please." Now they both stand up and walk home to the hut. Thorkell sees that Grim was growing faint from loss of blood, so he took Skofnung's-stone and rubbed it on, and ties it to the arm of Grim, and it took forthwith all smarting pain and swelling out of the wound. They stayed there that night. In the morning Thorkell got ready to go away, and asked if Grim would go with him. He said that sure enough that was his will. Thorkell turns straightway westward without going to meet Eid, nor halted he till he came to Sælingsdale Tongue. Snorri the Priest welcomes him with great blitheness. Thorkell told him that his journey had sped lucklessly. Snorri said it had turned out well, "for Grim looks to me a man endowed with good luck, and my will is that you make matters up with him handsomely. But now, my friend, I would like to counsel you to leave off trade-journeyings, and to settle down and marry, and become a chief as befits your high birth." Thorkell answered, "Often your counsels have stood me in good stead," and he asked if Snorri had bethought him of the woman he should woo. Snorri answers, "You must woo the woman who is the best match for you, and that woman is Gudrun, Osvif's daughter." Thorkell said it was true that a marriage with her would be an honourable one. "But," says he, "I think her fierce heart and reckless-mindedness weigh heavily, for she will want to have her husband, Bolli, avenged. Besides, it is said that on this matter there is some understanding between her and Thorgils Hallason, and it may be that this will not be altogether to his liking. Otherwise, Gudrun pleases me well." Snorri said, "I will undertake to see that no harm shall come to you from Thorgils; but as to the revenge for Bolli, I am rather in hopes that concerning that matter some change will have befallen before these seasons (this year) are out." Thorkell answered, "It may be that these be no empty words you are speaking now. But as to the revenge of Bolli, that does not seem to me more likely to happen now than it did a while ago, unless into that strife some of the greater men may be drawn." Snorri said, "I should be well pleased to see you go abroad once more this summer, to let us see then what happens." Thorkell said so it should be, and they parted, leaving matters where they now stood. Thorkell went west over Broadfirth-country to his ship. He took Grim with him abroad. They had a good summer-voyage, and came to the south of Norway. Then Thorkell said to Grim, "You know how the case stands, and what things happened to bring about our acquaintance, so I need say nothing about that matter; but I would fain that it should turn out better than at one time it seemed likely it would. I have found you a valiant man, and for that reason I will so part from you, as if I had never borne you any grudge. I will give you as much merchandise as you need in order to be able to join the guild of good merchants. But do not settle down here in the north of this land, for many of Eid's kinsmen are about on trading journeys who bear you heavy ill-will." Grim thanked him for these words, and said he could never have thought of asking for as much as he offered. At parting Thorkell gave to Grim a goodly deal of merchandise, and many men said that this deed bore the stamp of a great man. After that Grim went east in the Wick, settled there, and was looked upon as a mighty man of his ways; and therewith comes to an end what there is to be told about Grim. Thorkell was in Norway through the winter, and was thought a man of much account; he was exceeding wealthy in chattels. Now this matter must be left for a while, and the story must be taken up out in Iceland, so let us hear what matters befell there for tidings to be told of whilst Thorkell was abroad.

Chap. LIX: Gudrun demands Revenge for Bolli, A.D. 1019

In "Twinmonth" that summer Gudrun, Osvif's daughter, went from home up into the Dales. She rode to Thickshaw; and at this time Thorleik was sometimes at Thickshaw with the sons of Armod Halldor and Ornolf, and sometimes Tongue with Thorgils. The same night Gudrun sent a man to Snorri Godi saying that she wished to meet him without fail the next day. Snorri got ready at once and rode with one other man until he came to Hawkdale-river; on the northern side of that river stands a crag by the river called Head, within the land of Lea-Shaw. At this spot Gudrun had bespoken that she and Snorri should meet. They both came there at one and the same time. With Gudrun there was only one man, and he was Bolli, son of Bolli; he was now twelve years old, but fulfilled of strength and wits was he, so much so, that many were they who were no whit more powerful at the time of ripe manhood; and now he carried Footbiter. Snorri and Gudrun now fell to talking together; but Bolli and Snorri's follower sat on the crag and watched people travelling up and down the countryside. When Snorri and Gudrun had asked each other for news, Snorri inquired on what errand he was called, and what had come to pass lately that she sent him word so hurriedly. Gudrun said, "Truth to tell, to me is ever fresh the event which I am about to bring up, and yet it befell twelve years ago; for it is about the revenge of Bolli I wish to speak, and it ought not to take you unawares. I have called it to your mind from time to time. I must also bring this home to you that to this end you have promised me some help if I but waited patiently, but now I think it past hope that you will give any heed to our case. I have now waited as long as my temper would hold out, and I must have whole-hearted counsel from you as to where this revenge is to be brought home." Snorri asked what she chiefly had in her mind's eye. Gudrun said, "It is my wish that all Olaf's sons should not go scatheless." Snorri said he must forbid any onset on the men who were not only of the greatest account in the countryside, but also closely akin to those who stand nearest to back up the revenge; and it is high time already that these family feuds come to an end. Gudrun said, "Then Lambi shall be set upon and slain; for then he, who is the most eager of them for evil, would be put out of the way." Snorri said, "Lambi is guilty enough that he should be slain; but I do not think Bolli any the more revenged for that; for when at length peace should come to be settled, no such disparity between them would be acknowledged as ought to be due to Bolli when the manslaughter of both should come up for award." Gudrun spoke, "It may be that we shall not get our right out of the men of Salmon-river-Dale, but some one shall pay dear for it, whatever dale he may dwell in. So we shall turn upon Thorstein the Black, for no one has taken a worse share in these matters than he." Snorri spoke, "Thorstein's guilt against you is the same as that of the other men who joined in the raid against Bolli, but did not wound him. But you leave such men to sit by in quiet on whom it seems to me revenge wrought would be revenge indeed, and who, moreover, did take the life of Bolli, such as was Helgi Harðbienson." Gudrun said, "That is true, but I cannot be sure that, in that case, all these men against whom I have been stirring up enmity will sit quietly by doing nothing." Snorri said, "I see a good way to hinder that. Lambi and Thorstein shall join the train of your sons, and that is a fitting ransom for those fellows, Lambi and Thorstein; but if they will not do this, then I shall not plead for them to be let off, whatever penalty you may be pleased to put upon them." Gudrun spoke: "How shall we set about getting these men that you have named to go on this journey?" Snorri spoke: "That is the business of them who are to be at the head of the journey." Gudrun spoke: "In this we must have your foresight as to who shall rule the journey and be the leader." Then Snorri smiled and said, "You have chosen your own men for it." Gudrun replied, "You are speaking of Thorgils." Snorri said so it was. Gudrun spoke: "I have talked the matter over already with Thorgils, but now it is as good as all over, for he gave me the one choice, which I would not even look at. He did not back out of undertaking to avenge Bolli, if he could have me in marriage in return; but that is past all hope, so I cannot ask him to go this journey." Snorri spoke: "On this I will

give you a counsel, for I do not begrudge Thorgils this journey. You shall promise marriage to him, yet you shall do it in language of this double meaning, that of men in this land you will marry none other but Thorgils, and that shall be holden to, for Thorkell Eyjolfson is not, for the time being, in this land, but it is he whom I have in my mind's eye for this marriage." Gudrun spake: "He will see through this trick." Snorri answered, "Indeed he will not see through it, for Thorgils is better known for foolhardiness than wits. Make the covenant with but few men for witnesses, and let Halldor, his foster-brother, be there, but not Ornolf, for he has more wits, and lay the blame on me if this will not work out." After that they parted their talk and each bade the other farewell, Snorri riding home, and Gudrun unto Thickshaw. The next morning Gudrun rode from Thickshaw and her sons with her, and when they ride west along Shawstrand they see that men are riding after them. They ride on quickly and catch them up swiftly, and lo, there was Thorgils Hallason. They greeted each other well, and now ride on in the day all together, out to Holyfell.

Chap. LX: The Egging of Gudrun

A few nights after Gudrun had come home she called her sons to her to have a talk with them in her orchard; and when they were come there they saw how there were lying out some linen clothes, a shirt and linen breeches, and they were much stained with blood. Then spake Gudrun: "These same clothes you see here cry to you for your father's revenge. I will not say many words on this matter, for it is past hope that you will heed an egging-on by words alone if you bring not home to your minds such hints and reminders as these." The brothers were much startled as this, and at what Gudrun had to say; but yet this way they made answer that they had been too young to seek for revenge without a leader; they knew not, they felt, how to frame a counsel for themselves or others either. "But we might well bear in mind what we have lost," Gudrun said, "They would be likely to give more thought to horse-fights or sports." After that they went away. The next night the brothers could not sleep. Thorgils got aware of this, and asked them what was the matter. They told him all the talk they had had with their mother, and this withal that they could no longer bear their grief or their mother's taunts. "We will seek revenge," said Bolli, "now that we brothers have come to so ripe an age that men will be much after us if we do not take the matter in hand." The next day Gudrun and Thorgils had a talk together, and Gudrun started speaking in this wise: "I am given to think, Thorgils, that my sons brook it ill to sit thus quietly on any longer without seeking revenge for their father's death. But what mostly has delayed the matter hitherto is that up to now I deemed Thorleik and Bolli too young to be busy in taking men's lives. But need enough there has been to call this to mind a good long time before this. Thorgils answered, "There is no use in your talking this matter over with me, because you have given a flat denial to 'walking with me' (marrying me). But I am in just the same frame of mind as I have been before, when we have had talks about this matter. If I can marry you, I shall not think twice about killing either or both of the two who had most to do with the murder of Bolli." Gudrun spoke: "I am given to think that to Thorleik no man seems as well fitted as you to be the leader if anything is to be done in the way of deeds of hardihood. Nor is it a matter to be hidden from you that the lads are minded to go for Helgi Harðbienson the 'Bareserk,' who sits at home in his house in Skorrídale misdoubting himself of nothing." Thorgils spake: "I never care whether he is called Helgi or by any other name, for neither in Helgi nor in any one else do I deem I have an over-match in strength to deal with. As far as I am concerned, the last word on this matter is now spoken if you promise before witnesses to marry me when, together with your sons, I have wreaked the revenge." Gudrun said she would fulfil all she should agree to, even though such agreement were come to before few men to witness it. "And," said she, "this then we shall settle to have done." Gudrun bade be called thither Halldor, Thorgils' foster-brother, and her own sons. Thorgils bade that Ornolf should also be with them. Gudrun said there was no need of that, "For I am more doubtful of Ornolf's faithfulness to you than I think you are yourself." Thorgils told her to do as she liked.

Now the brothers come and meet Gudrun and Thorgils, Halldor being also at the parley with them. Gudrun now sets forth to them that "Thorgils has said he will be the leader in this raid against Helgi Hardbienson, together with my sons, for revenge of Bolli, and Thorgils has bargained in return for this undertaking to get me for wife. Now I avow, with you to witness, that I promise this to Thorgils, that of men in this land I shall marry none but him, and I do not purpose to go and marry in any other land." Thorgils thought that this was binding enough, and did not see through it. And now they broke up their talk. This counsel is now fully settled that Thorgils must betake himself to this journey. He gets ready to leave Holyfell, and with him the sons of Gudrun, and they rode up into the Dales and first to the homestead at Tongue.

Chap. LXI: Of Thorstein the Black and Lambi

The next Lord's day a leet was held, and Thorgils rode thither with his company, Snorri Godi was not at the leet, but there was a great many people together. During the day Thorgils fetched up Thorstein the Black for a talk with him, and said, "As you know, you were one in the onset by the sons of Olaf when Bolli was slain, and you have made no atonement for your guilt to his sons. Now although a long time is gone since those things befell, I think their mind has not given the slip to the men who were in that raid. Now, these brothers look in this light upon the matter, that it beseech them least, by reason of kinship, to seek revenge on the sons of Olaf; and so the brothers purpose to turn for revenge upon Helgi Hardbienson, for he gave Bolli his death-wound. So we ask this of you, Thorstein, that you join in this journey with the brothers, and thus purchase for yourself peace and good-will." Thorstein replied, "It beseech me not at all to deal in treason with Helgi, my brother-in-law, and I would far rather purchase my peace with as much money as it would be to their honour to take." Thorgils said, "I think it is but little to the mind of the brothers to do aught herein for their own gain; so you need not hide it away from yourself, Thorstein, that at your hands there lie two choices: either to betake yourself to this journey, or to undergo the harshest of treatments from them as soon as they may bring it about; and my will is, that you take this choice in spite of the ties that bind you to Helgi; for when men find themselves in such straits, each must look after himself." Thorstein spake: "Will the same choice be given to more of the men who are charged with guilt by the sons of Bolli?" Thorgils answered, "The same choice will be put to Lambi." Thorstein said he would think better of it if he was not left the only one in this plight. After that Thorgils called Lambi to come and meet him, and bade Thorstein listen to their talk. He said, "I wish to talk over with you, Lambi, the same matter that I have set forth to Thorstein; to wit, what amends you are willing to make to the sons of Bolli for the charges of guilt which they have against you? For it has been told me as true that you wrought wounds on Bolli; but besides that, you are heavily guilt-beset, in that you urged it hard that Bolli should be slain; yet, next to the sons of Olaf, you were entitled to some excuse in the matter." Then Lambi asked what he would be asked to do. Thorgils said the same choice would be put to him as to Thorstein, "to join with the brothers in this journey." Lambi said, "This I think an evil price of peace and a dastardly one, and I have no mind for this journey." Then said Thorstein, "It is not the only thing open to view, Lambi, to cut so quickly away from this journey; for in this matter great men are concerned, men of much worth, moreover, who deem that they have long had to put up with an unfair lot in life. It is also told me of Bolli's sons that they are likely to grow into men of high mettle, and that they are exceeding masterful; but the wrong they have to wreak is great. We cannot think of escaping from making some amends after such awful deeds. I shall be the most open to people's reproaches for this by reason of my alliance with Helgi. But I think most people are given to 'setting all aside for life,' and the trouble on hand that presses hardest must first be thrust out of the way." Lambi said, "It is easy to see what you urge to be done, Thorstein; and I think it well befitting that you have your own way in this matter, if you think that is the only way you see open, for ours has been a long partnership in

great troubles. But I will have this understood if I do go into this business, that my kinsmen, the sons of Olaf, shall be left in peace if the revenge on Helgi shall be carried out." Thorgils agreed to this on behalf of the brothers. So now it was settled that Lambi and Thorstein should betake themselves to the journey with Thorgils; and they bespoke it between them that they should come early on the third day (Tuesday) to Tongue, in Hord-Dale. After that they parted. Thorgils rode home that evening to Tongue. Now passes on the time within which it was bespoken they should come to Tongue. In the morning of the third day (Tuesday), before sunrise, Thorstein and Lambi came to Tongue, and Thorgils gave them a cheerful welcome.

Chap. LXII: Thorgils and his Followers leave Home

Thorgils got himself ready to leave home, and they all rode up along Hord-Dale, ten of them together. There Thorgils Hallason was the leader of the band. In that train the sons of Bolli, Thorleik and Bolli, and Thord the Cat, their brother, was the fourth, the fifth was Thorstein the Black, the sixth Lambi, the seventh and eighth Haldor and Ornlolf, the ninth Svein, and the tenth Hunbogi. Those last were the sons of Alf o' Dales. They rode on their way up to Sweeping-Pass, and across Long-waterdale, and then right across Burgfirth. They rode across North-river at Isleford, but across White-river at Bankford, a short way down from the homestead of By. Then they rode over Reekdale, and over the neck of land to Skorradale, and so up through the wood in the neighbourhood of the farmstead of Water-Nook, where they got off their horses, as it was very late in the evening. The homestead of Water-Nook stands a short way from the lake on the south side of the river. Thorgils said to his followers that they must tarry there over night, "and I will go to the house and spy and see if Helgi be at home. I am told Helgi has at most times very few men with him, but that he is of all men the wariest of himself, and sleeps on a strongly made lock-bed." Thorgils' followers bade him follow his own foresight. Thorgils now changed his clothes, and took off his blue cloak, and slipped on a grey foul-weather overall. He went home to the house. When he was come near to the homestead fence he saw a man coming to meet him, and when they met Thorgils said, "You will think my questions strange, comrade, but whose am I come to in this countryside, and what is the name of this dwelling, and who lives here?" The man answered, "You must be indeed a wondrous fool and wit-bereft if you have not heard Helgi Hardbienson spoken of, the bravest of warriors, and a great man withal." Thorgils next asked how far Helgi took kindly to unknown people coming to see him, such as were in great need of help. He replied, "In that matter, if truth is told, only good can be said of Helgi, for he is the most large-hearted of men, not only in giving harbour to comers, but also in all his high conduct otherwise." "Is Helgi at home now?" asked Thorgils; "I should like to ask him to take me in." The other then asks what matters he had on his hands. Thorgils answered, "I was outlawed this summer at the Thing, and I want to seek for myself the help of some such man as is a mighty one of his hands and ways, and I will in return offer my fellowship and service. So now you take me home to the house to see Helgi." "I can do that very well, to show you home," he said, "for you will be welcome to quarters for the night, but you will not see Helgi, for he is not at home." Then Thorgils asked where he was. The man answered, "He is at his out-dairy called Sarp." Thorgils asked where that was, and what men were with him. He said his son Hardbien was there, and two other men, both outlaws, whom he had taken in to shelter. Thorgils bade him show the nearest way to the dairy, "for I want to meet Helgi at once, when I can get to him and plead my errand to him." The house-carle did so and showed him the way, and after that they parted. Thorgils returned to the wood to his companions, and told them what he had found out about Helgi. "We must tarry here through the night, and not go to the dairy till to-morrow morning." They did as he ordained, and in the morning Thorgils and his band rode up through the wood till they were within a short way from the dairy. Then Thorgils bade them get off their horses and eat their morning meal, and so they did, and kept them for a while.

Chap. LXIII: The Description of his Enemies brought to Helgi

Now we must tell what happened at the dairy where Helgi was, and with him the men that were named before. In the morning Helgi told his shepherd to go through the woods in the neighbourhood of the dairy and look out for people passing, and take heed of whatever else he saw, to tell news of, "for my dreams have gone heavily to-night." The lad went even as Helgi told him. He was away awhile, and when he came back Helgi asked what he had seen to tell tidings of. He answered, "I have seen what I think is stuff for tidings." Helgi asked what that was. He said he had seen men, "and none so few either, and I think they must have come from beyond this countryside." Helgi spoke: "Where were they when you saw them, and what were they doing, or did you take heed of the manner of raiment, or their looks?" He answered, "I was not so much taken aback at the sight as not to mind those matters, for I knew you would ask about them." He also said they were but short away from the dairy, and were eating their morning meal. Helgi asked if they sat in a ring or side by side in a line. He said they sat in a ring, on their saddles. Helgi said, "Tell me now of their looks, and I will see if I can guess from what they looked like who the men may be." The lad said, "There sat a man in a stained saddle, in a blue cloak. He was great of growth, and valiant-looking; he was bald in front and somewhat 'tooth-bare.'" Helgi said, "I know that man clearly from your tale. There you have seen Thorgils Hallason, from west out of Hord-Dale. I wonder what he wants with us, the hero." The lad spoke: "Next to him sat a man in a gilded saddle; he had on a scarlet kirtle, and a gold ring on his arm, and a gold-embroidered fillet was tied round his head. This man had yellow hair, waving down over his shoulders; he was fair of hue, with a knot on his nose, which was somewhat turned up at the tip, with very fine eyes—blue-eyed and swift-eyed, and with a glance somewhat restless, broad-browed and full-cheeked; he had his hair cut across his forehead. He was well grown as to breadth of shoulders and depth of chest. He had very beautiful hands, and strong-looking arms. All his bearing was courteous, and, in a word, I have never seen a man so altogether doughty-looking. He was a young-looking man too, for his lips had grown no beard, but it seemed to me he was aged by grief." Then Helgi answers: "You have paid a careful heed, indeed, to this man, and of much account he must needs be; yet this man, I think, I have never seen, so I must make a guess at it who he is. There, I think, must have been Bolli Bollison, for I am told he has in him the makings of a man." Then the lad went on: "Next there sat a man on an enamelled saddle in a yellow green kirtle; he had a great finger ring on his hand. This man was most goodly to behold, and must still be young of age; his hair was auburn and most comely, and in every way he was most courtly." Helgi answers, "I think I know who this man is, of whom you have now been telling. He must be Thorleik Bollison, and a sharp and mindful man you are." The lad said again, "Next sat a young man; he was in a blue kirtle and black breeches, and his tunic tucked into them. This man was straight-faced, light of hair, with a goodly-featured face, slender and graceful." Helgi answered, "I know that man, for I must have seen him, though at a time when he was quite young; for it must be Thord Thordson, fosterling of Snorri the Priest. And a very courtly band they have, the Westfirthers. What is there yet to tell?" Then the lad said, "There sat a man on a Scotch saddle, hoary of beard and very sallow of hue, with black curly hair, somewhat unsightly and yet warrior like; he had on a grey pleated cape." Helgi said, "I clearly see who that man is; there is Lambi, the son of Thorbjorn, from Salmon-river-Dale; but I cannot think why he should be in the train of these brothers." The lad spoke: "There sat a man on a pommel saddle, and had on a blue cloak for an overall, with a silver ring on his arm; he was a farmer-looking sort of man and past the prime of life, with dark auburn long curly hair, and scars about his face." "Now the tale grows worse by much," said Helgi, "for there you must have seen Thorstein the Black, my brother-in-law; and a wondrous thing indeed I deem it, that he should be in this journey, nor would I ever offer him such a home-raid. But what more is there still to tell?" He answered, "Next there sat two men like each other to

look upon, and might have been of middle age; most brisk they looked, red of hair, freckled of face, yet goodly to behold." Helgi said, "I can clearly understand who those men are. There are the sons of Armod, foster-brothers of Thorgils, Halldor and Ormolf. And a very trustworthy fellow you are. But have you now told the tale of all the men you saw?" He answered, "I have but little to add now. Next there sat a man and looked out of the circle; he was in a plate-corselet and had a steel cap on his head, with a brim a hand's breadth wide; he bore a shining axe on his shoulder, the edge of which must have measured an ell in length. This man was dark of hue, black-eyed, and most viking like." Helgi answered, "I clearly know this man from your tale. There has been Hunbogi the Strong, son of Alf o' Dales. But what I find so hard to make out is, what they want journeying with such a very picked company." The lad spoke again: "And still there sat a man next to this strong-looking one, dark auburn of hair, thick-faced and red-faced, heavy of brow, of a tall middle size." Helgi said, "You need not tell the tale further, there must have been Svein, son of Alf o' Dales, brother of Hunbogi. Now it would be as well not to stand shiftless in the face of these men; for near to my mind's foreboding it is, that they are minded to have a meeting with me or ever they leave this countryside; moreover, in this train there are men who would hold that it would have been but due and meet, though this our meeting should have taken a good long time before this. Now all the women who are in the dairy slip on quickly men's dress and take the horses that are about the dairy and ride as quickly as possible to the winter dwelling; it may be that those who are besetting us about will not know whether men or women be riding there; they need give us only a short respite till we bring men together here, and then it is not so certain on which side the outlook will be most hopeful." The women now rode off, four together. Thorgils misdoubts him lest news of their coming may have reached Helgi, and so bade the others take their horses and ride after them at their swiftest, and so they did, but before they mounted a man came riding up to them openly in all men's sight. He was small of growth and all on the alert, wondrously swift of glance and had a lively horse. This man greeted Thorgils in a familiar manner, and Thorgils asked him his name and family and also whence he had come. He said his name was Hrapp, and he was from Broadfirth on his mother's side. "And then I grew up, and I bear the name of Fight-Hrapp, with the name follows that I am nowise an easy one to deal with, albeit I am small of growth; but I am a southlander on my father's side, and have tarried in the south for some winters. Now this is a lucky chance, Thorgils, I have happened of you here, for I was minded to come and see you anyhow, even though I should find it a business somewhat hard to follow up. I have a trouble on hand; I have fallen out with my master, and have had from him a treatment none of the best; but it goes with the name, that I will stand no man such shameful mishandling, so I made an outset at him, but I guess I wounded him little or not at all, for I did not wait long enough to see for myself, but thought myself safe when I got on to the back of this nag, which I took from the Goodman." Hrapp says much, but asks for few things; yet soon he got to know that they were minded to set on Helgi, and that pleased him very much, and he said they would not have to look for him behind.

Chap. LXIV: The Death of Helgi, A.D. 1019

Thorgils and his followers, as soon as they were on horseback, set off at a hard ride, and rode now out of the wood. They saw four men riding away from the dairy, and they rode very fast too. Seeing this, some of Thorgils' companions said they had better ride after them at their swiftest. Then said Thorleik Bollison, "We will just go to the dairy and see what men are there, for I think it less likely that these be Helgi and his followers. It seems to me that those are only women." A good many of them gainsaid this. Thorgils said that Thorleik should rule in the matter, for he knew that he was a very far-sighted man. They now turned to the dairy. Hrapp rode first, shaking the spear-stick he carried in his hand, and thrusting it forward in front of himself, and saying now was high time to try one's self. Helgi and his followers were not aware of anything till Thorgils and his company had

surrounded the dairy. Helgi and his men shut the door, and seized their weapons. Hrapp leapt forthwith upon the roof of the dairy, and asked if old Reynard was in. Helgi answered, "You will come to take for granted that he who is here within is somewhat hurtful, and will know how to bite near the warren." And forthwith Helgi thrust his spear out through the window and through Hrapp, so that he fell dead to earth from the spear. Thorgils bade the others go heedfully and beware of mishaps, "for we have plenty of means wherewith to get the dairy into our power, and to overcome Helgi, placed as he is now, for I am given to think that here but few men are gathered together." The dairy was rigged over one roof-beam, resting on two gables so that the ends of the beam stuck out beyond each gable; there was a single turf thatch on the house, which had not yet grown together. Then Thorgils told some of his men to go to the beam ends, and pull them so hard that either the beam should break or else the rafters should slip in off it, but others were to guard the door lest those within should try and get out. Five they were, Helgi and his within the dairy—Hardbien, his son, to wit, he was twelve years old—his shepherd and two other men, who had come to him that summer, being outlaws—one called Thorgils, and the other Eyolf. Thorstein the Black and Svein, son of Alf o' Dales, stood before the door. The rest of the company were tearing the roof off the dairy. Hunbogi the Strong and the sons of Armod took one end of the beam, Thorgils, Lambi, and Gudrun's sons the other end. They now pull hard at the beam till it broke asunder in the middle; just at this Hardbien thrust a halberd out through where the door was broken, and the thrust struck the steel cap of Thorstein the Black and stuck in his forehead, and that was a very great wound. Then Thorstein said, as was true, that there were men before them. Next Helgi leapt so boldly out of the door so that those nearest shrunk aback. Thorgils was standing near, and struck after him with a sword, and caught him on the shoulder and made a great wound. Helgi turned to meet him, and had a wood-axe in his hand, and said, "Still the old one will dare to look at and face weapons," and therewith he flung the axe at Thorgils, and the axe struck his foot, and a great wound that was. And when Bolli saw this he leapt forward at Helgi with Footbiter in his hand, and thrust Helgi through with it, and that was his death-blow. Helgi's followers leapt out of the dairy forthwith, and Hardbien with them. Thorleik Bollison turned against Eyolf, who was a strong man. Thorleik struck him with his sword, and it caught him on the leg above the knee and cut off his leg, and he fell to earth dead. Hunbogi the Strong went to meet Thorgils, and dealt a blow at him with an axe, and it struck the back of him, and cut him asunder in the middle. Thord Cat was standing near where Hardbien leapt out, and was going to set upon him straightway, but Bolli rushed forward when he saw it, and bade no harm be done to Hardbien. "No man shall do a dastard's work here, and Hardbien shall have life and limbs spared." Helgi had another son named Skorri. He was brought up at Gugland in Reekdale the southernmost.

Chap. LXV: Of Gudrun's Deceit

After these deeds Thorgils and his band rode away over the neck to Reekdale, where they declared these manslaughters on their hands. Then they rode the same way eastward as they had ridden from the west, and did not stop their journey till they came to Hord-Dale. They now told the tidings of what had happened in their journey, which became most famous, for it was thought a great deed to have felled such a hero as was Helgi. Thorgils thanked his men well for the journey, and the sons of Bolli did the same. And now the men part who had been in Thorgils' train; Lambi rode west to Salmon-river-Dale, and came first to Herdholt and told his kinsmen most carefully the tidings of what had happened in Skorradales. They were very ill-pleased with his journey and laid heavy reproaches upon him, saying he had shown himself much more of the stock of Thorbjorn "Skrjup" than of that of Myrkjartan, the Irish king. Lambi was very angry at their talk, and said they knew but little of good manners in overwhelming him with reproaches, "for I have dragged you out of death," says he. After that they exchanged but few words, for both sides were yet more fulfilled of ill-will than before. Lambi now rode home to

his manor. Thorgils Hallason rode out to Holyfell, and with him the sons of Gudrun and his foster-brothers Halldor and Ornolf. They came late in the evening to Holyfell, when all men were in bed. Gudrun rose up and bade the household get up and wait upon them. She went into the guest-chamber and greeted Thorgils and all the others, and asked for tidings. Thorgils returned Gudrun's greeting; he had laid aside his cloak and his weapons as well, and sat then up against the pillars. Thorgils had on a red-brown kirtle, and had round his waist a broad silver belt. Gudrun sat down on the bench by him. Then Thorgils said this stave—

"To Helgi's home a raid we led,
Gave ravens corpse-repast to swallow,
We dyed shield-wands with blood all red,
As Thorleik's lead our band did follow.
And at our hands there perished three
Keen helmet-stems, accounted truly
As worthies of the folk—and we
Claim Bolli now's avenged full duly."

Gudrun asked them most carefully for the tidings of what had happened on their journey. Thorgils told her all she wished. Gudrun said the journey had been most stirringly carried out, and bade them have her thanks for it. After that food was set before them, and after they had eaten they were shown to bed, and slept the rest of the night. The next day Thorgils went to talk to Gudrun, and said, "Now the matter stands thus, as you know, Gudrun, that I have brought to an end the journey you bade me undertake, and I must claim that, in a full manly wise, that matter has been turned out of hand; you will also call to mind what you promised me in return, and I think I am now entitled to that prize." Then Gudrun said, "It is not such a long time since we last talked together that I should have forgotten what we said, and my only aim is to hold to all I agreed to as concerning you. Or what does your mind tell you as to how matters were bespoken between us?" Thorgils said she must remember that, and Gudrun answered, "I think I said that of men within this land I would marry none but you; or have you aught to say against that?" Thorgils said she was right. "That is well then," said Gudrun, "that our memory should be one and the same on this matter. And I will not put it off from you any longer, that I am minded to think that it is not fated to me to be your wife. Yet I deem that I fulfil to you all uttered words, though I marry Thorkell Eyjolfson, who at present is not in this land." Then Thorgils said, and flushed up very much, "Clearly I do see from whence that chill wave comes running, and from thence cold counsels have always come to me. I know that this is the counsel of Snorri the Priest." Thorgils sprang up from this talk and was very angry, and went to his followers and said he would ride away. Thorleik disliked very much that things should have taken such a turn as to go against Thorgils' will; but Bolli was at one with his mother's will herein. Gudrun said she would give Thorgils some good gifts and soften him by that means, but Thorleik said that would be of no use, "for Thorgils is far too high-mettled a man to stoop to trifles in a matter of this sort." Gudrun said in that case he must console himself as best he could at home. After this Thorgils rode from Holyfell with his foster-brothers. He got home to Tongue to his manor mightily ill at ease over his lot.

Chap. LXVI: Osvif and Gest die

That winter Osvif fell ill and died, and a great loss that was deemed, for he had been the greatest of sages. Osvif was buried at Holyfell, for Gudrun had had a church built there. That same winter Gest Oddliefson fell ill, and as the sickness grew heavy on him, he called to him Thord the Low, his son, and said, "My mind forebodes me that this sickness will put an end to our living together. I wish my body to be carried to Holyfell, for that will be the greatest place about these countrysides, for I have often seen a light burning there." Thereupon Gest died. The winter had been very cold, and there was much ice about, and Broadfirth was laid under ice so far out that no ship could get over it from Bardistrand. Gest's body lay in state two nights at Hegi, and that very night there sprang up such a gale that all the ice was drawn away from the land, and the next day the weather was fair and still. Then Thord took a ship and put Gest's body on board, and went south across Broadfirth that day, and came in the evening

to Holyfell. Thord had a good welcome there, and stayed there through the night. In the morning Gest's body was buried, and he and Osvalf rested in one grave. So Gest's soothsaying was fulfilled, in that now it was shorter between them than at the time when one dwelt at Bardistrand and the other in Sælingsdale. Thord the Low then went home as soon as he was ready. That next night a wild storm arose, and drove the ice on to the land again, where it held on long through the winter, so that there was no going about in boats. Men thought this most marvellous, that the weather had allowed Gest's body to be taken across when there was no crossing before nor afterwards during the winter.

Chap. LXVII: The Death of Thorgils Hallason, A.D. 1020

Thorarin was the name of a man who lived at Longdale: he was a chieftain, but not a mighty one. His son was named Audgisl, and was a nimble sort of a man. Thorgils Hallason took the chieftainship from them both, father and son. Audgisl went to see Snorri Godi, and told him of this unfairness, and asked him to help. Snorri answered only by fair words, and belittled the whole affair; but answered, "Now that Halla's-grig is getting too forward and swaggering. Will Thorgils then happen on no man that will not give in to him in everything? No doubt he is a big man and doughty, but men as good as he is have also been sent to Hel." And when Audgisl went away Snorri gave him an inlaid axe. The next spring Thorgils Hallason and Thorstein the Black went south to Burgfirth, and offered atonement to the sons of Helgi and his other kinsmen, and they came to terms of peace on the matter, and fair honour was done (to Helgi's side). Thorstein paid two parts of the atonement for the manslaughter, and the third part Thorgils was to pay, payment being due at the Thing. In the summer Thorgils rode to the Thing, but when he and his men came to the lava field by Thingvellir, they saw a woman coming to meet them, and a mighty big one she was. Thorgils rode up to her, but she turned aside, and said this—

"Take care
If you go forward,
And be wary
Of Snorri's wiles,
No one can escape,
For so wise is Snorri."

And after that she went her way. Then Thorgils said, "It has seldom happened so before, when luck was with me, that you were leaving the Thing when I was riding to it." He now rode to the Thing and to his own booth. And through the early part the Thing was quiet. It happened one day during the Thing that folk's clothes were hung out to dry. Thorgils had a blue hooded cloak, which was spread out on the booth wall, and men heard the cloak say thus—

"Hanging wet on the wall,
A hooded cloak knows a braid (trick);
I do not say he does not know two,
He has been lately washed."

This was thought a most marvellous thing. The next day Thorgils went west over the river to pay the money to the sons of Helgi. He sat down on the lava above the booths, and with him was his foster-brother Halldor and sundry more of them were there together. The sons of Helgi came to the meeting. Thorgils now began to count out the money. Audgisl Thorarinson came near, and when Thorgils had counted ten Audgisl struck at him, and all thought they heard the head say eleven as it flew off the neck. Audgisl ran to the booth of the Waterfirthers and Halldor rushed after him and struck him his death-blow in the door of the booth. These tidings came to the booth of Snorri Godi how Thorgils was slain. Snorri said, "You must be mistaken; it must be that Thorgils Hallason has slain some one." The man replied, "Why, the head flew off his trunk." "Then perhaps it is time," said Snorri. This manslaughter was peacefully atoned, as is told in the Saga of Thorgils Hallason.

Chap. LXVIII: Gudrun's Marriage with Thorkell Eyjolfson

The same summer that Thorgils Hallason was killed a ship came to Bjorn's-haven. It belonged to Thorkell Eyjolfson. He was by then such a rich man that he had two merchant ships on voyages. The other ship came to Ramfirth to Board-Eyr; they were both laden with timber. When Snorri heard of the coming of Thorkell he rode at once to where the ship was. Thorkell gave him a most blithe welcome; he had a great deal of drink with him in his ship, and right unstintedly it was served, and many things they found to talk about. Snorri asked tidings of Norway, and Thorkell told him everything well and truthfully. Snorri told in return the tidings of all that had happened here while Thorkell had been away. "Now it seems to me," said Snorri, "you had better follow the counsel I set forth to you before you went abroad, and should give up voyaging about and settle down in quiet, and get for yourself the same woman to wife of whom we spoke then." Thorkell replied, "I understand what you are driving at; everything we bespoke then is still uppermost in my mind, for indeed I begrudge me not the noblest of matches could it but be brought about." Snorri spake, "I am most willing and ready to back that matter up on your behalf, seeing that now we are rid of both the things that seemed to you the most troublesome to overcome, if you were to get Gudrun for wife at all, in that Bolli is revenged and Thorgils is out of the way." Thorkell said, "Your counsels go very deep, Snorri, and into this affair I go heart and soul." Snorri stayed in the ship several nights, and then they took a ten-oared boat that floated alongside of the merchant ship and got ready with five-and-twenty men, and went to Holyfell. Gudrun gave an exceeding affectionate welcome to Snorri, and a most goodly cheer they had; and when they had been there one night Snorri called Gudrun to talk to him, and spake, "Matters have come to this, that I have undertaken this journey for my friend Thorkell, Eyjolf's son, and he has now come here, as you see, and his errand hither is to set forth the wooing of you. Thorkell is a man of noble degree. You know yourself all about his race and doings in life, nor is he short of wealth either. To my mind, he is now the one man west about here who is most likely to become a chieftain, if to that end he will put himself forward. Thorkell is held in great esteem when he is out there, but by much is he more honoured when he is in Norway in the train of titled men." Then answers Gudrun: "My sons Thorleik and Bolli must have most to say in this matter; but you, Snorri, are the third man on whom I shall most rely for counsels in matters by which I set a great store, for you have long been a wholesome guide to me." Snorri said he deemed it a clear case that Thorkell must not be turned off. Thereupon Snorri had the sons of Gudrun called in, and sets forth the matter to them, laying down how great an help Thorkell might afford them by reason of his wealth and wise foresight; and smoothly he framed his speech on this matter. Then Bolli answered: "My mother will know how most clearly to see through this matter, and herein I shall be of one mind with her own will. But, to be sure, we shall deem it wise to set much store by your pleading this matter, Snorri, for you have done to us mightily well in many things." Then Gudrun spake: "In this matter we will lean most on Snorri's foresight, for to us your counsels have been wholesome." Snorri urged the matter on by every word he spoke, and the counsel taken was, that Gudrun and Thorkell should be joined in marriage. Snorri offered to have the wedding at his house; and Thorkell, liking that well, said: "I am not short of means, and I am ready to furnish them in whatever measure you please." Then Gudrun spake: "It is my wish that the feast be held here at Holyfell. I do not blench at standing the cost of it, nor shall I call upon Thorkell or any one else to trouble themselves about this matter." "Often, indeed, you show, Gudrun," said Snorri, "that you are the most high-mettled of women." So this was now settled that the wedding should take place when it lacked six weeks of summer. At matters thus settled Snorri and Thorkell went away, Snorri going home and Thorkell to his ship, and he spent the summer, turn and turn about, at Tongue or at his ship. Time now wore on towards the wedding feast. Gudrun made great preparation with much ingatherings. Snorri came to the feast together with Thorkell, and they brought with them well-

nigh sixty men, and a very picked company that was, for most of the men were in dyed raiments. Gudrun had well-nigh a hundred and twenty first-bidden guests. The brothers Bolli and Thorleik, with the first-bidden guests, went to meet Snorri and his train; and to him and his fellowship was given a right cheery welcome, and their horses are taken in hand, as well as their clothes. They were shown into the guest-chamber, and Thorkell and Snorri and their followers took seats on the bench that was the upper one, and Gudrun's guests sat on the lower.

Chap. LXIX: The Quarrel about Gunnar at the Feast

That autumn Gunnar, the slayer of Thridrandi, had been sent to Gudrun for "trust and keep," and she had taken him in, his name being kept secret. Gunnar was outlawed because of the slaying of Thridrandi, Geitir's son, as is told in the Niard-wickers' Saga. He went about much "with a hidden head," for that many great men had their eyes upon him. The first evening of the feast, when men went to wash, a big man was standing by the water; he was broad of shoulder and wide of chest, and this man had a hat on his head. Thorkell asked who he was. He named himself as it seemed best to him. Thorkell says: "I think you are not speaking the truth; going by what the tale tells you would seem more like to Gunnar, the slayer of Thridrandi. And if you are so great a hero as other men say, you will not keep hidden your name." Then said Gunnar: "You speak most eagerly on this matter; and, truth to tell, I think I have no need to hide myself from you. You have rightly named your man; but then, what have you chiefly bethought yourself of having done to me?" Thorkell said he would like that he should soon know it, and spake to his men, ordering them to lay hands on him. Gudrun sat on the dais at the upper end of the hall, together with other women all becoifed with white linen, and when she got aware of this she rises up from the bridal bench and calls on her men to lend Gunnar help, and told them to give quarter to no man who should show any doubtful behaviour. Gudrun had the greatest number of followers, and what never was meant to happen seemed like to befall. Snorri Godi went between both sides and bade them allay this storm. "The one thing clearly to be done by you, Thorkell, is not to push things on so hotly; and now you can see what a stirring woman Gudrun is, as she overrules both of us together." Thorkell said he had promised his namesake, Thorleik Geitir's son, that he would kill Gunnar if he came into the countrysides of the west. "And he is my greatest friend," Snorri spake. "You are much more in duty bound to act as we wish; and for yourself, it is a matter of the greatest importance, for you will never find such another woman as Gudrun, however far you may seek." And because of Snorri's reasoning, and seeing that he spoke the truth, Thorkell quieted down, and Gunnar was sent away that evening. The feast now went forward well and bravely, and when it was over the guests got ready to go away. Thorkell gave to Snorri very rich gifts, and the same to all the chief men. Snorri asked Bolli Bollison to go home with him, and to live with him as long as he liked. Bolli accepted this with thanks, and rides home to Tongue. Thorkell now settled down at Holyfell, and took in hand the affairs of the household, and it was soon seen that he was no worse a hand at that than at trade-voyaging. He had the hall pulled down in the autumn and a new one built, which was finished when the winter set in, and was both large and lofty. Between Gudrun and Thorkell dear love now grew up, and so the winter passed on. In the spring Gudrun asked how Thorkell was minded to look out for Gunnar the slayer of Thridrandi. He said that Gudrun had better take the management of that matter, "for you have taken it so hard in hand, that you will put up with nothing but that he be sent away with honour." Gudrun said he guessed aright: "I wish you to give him a ship, and therewithal such things as he cannot do without." Thorkell said and smiled, "You think nothing small on most matters, Gudrun, and would be ill served if you had a mean-minded man for a husband; nor has that ever been your heart's aim. Well, this shall be done after your own will"—and carried out it was. Gunnar took the gifts most gratefully. "I shall never be so 'long-armed' as to be able to repay all this great honour you are doing to me," he said. Gunnar now went abroad and came to

Norway, and then went to his own estates. Gunnar was exceeding wealthy, most great-hearted, and a good and true man withal.

Chap. LXX: Thorleik goes to Norway

Thorkell Eyjolfson became a great chieftain; he laid himself out much for friendships and honours. He was a masterful man within his own countryside, and busied himself much about law-suits; yet of his pleadings at court there is no tale to tell here. Thorkell was the richest man in Broadfirth during his lifetime next after Snorri. Thorkell kept his house in good order. He had all the houses at Holyfell rebuilt large and strong. He also had the ground of a church marked out, and gave it out that he had made up his mind to go abroad and fetch timber for the building of his church. Thorkell and Gudrun had a son who was called Gellir; he looked early most likely to turn out well. Bolli Bollison spent his time turn and turn about at Tongue or Holyfell, and Snorri was very fond of him. Thorleik his brother lived at Holyfell. These brothers were both tall and most doughty looking, Bolli being the foremost in all things. Thorkell was kind to his stepsons, and Gudrun loved Bolli most of all her children. He was now sixteen, and Thorleik twenty years old. So, once on a time, Thorleik came to talk to his stepfather and his mother, and said he wished to go abroad. "I am quite tired of sitting at home like a woman, and I wish that means to travel should be furnished to me." Thorkell said, "I do not think I have done against you two brothers in anything since our alliance began. Now, I think it is the most natural thing that you should yearn to get to know the customs of other men, for I know you will be counted a brisk man wheresoever you may come among doughty men." Thorleik said he did not want much money, "for it is uncertain how I may look after matters, being young and in many ways of an unsettled mind." Thorkell bade him have as much as he wanted. After that Thorkell bought for Thorleik a share in a ship that stood up in Daymeal-Ness, and saw him off to his ship, and fitted him well out with all things from home. Thorleik journeyed abroad that summer. The ship arrived in Norway. The lord over the land then was King Olaf the Holy. Thorleik went forthwith to see King Olaf, who gave him a good welcome; he knew Thorleik from his kindred, and so asked him to stay with him. Thorleik accepted with thanks, and stayed with the king that winter and became one of his guard, and the king held him in honour. Thorleik was thought the briskest of men, and he stayed on with King Olaf for several months. Now we must tell of Bolli Bollison. The spring when he was eighteen years old he spoke to his stepfather and his mother, and said that he wished they would hand him out his father's portion. Gudrun asked him what he had set his mind on doing, since he asked them to give him this money. Bolli answered, "It is my wish that a woman be wooed on my behalf, and I wish," said Bolli, "that you, Thorkell, be my spokesman and carry this through." Thorkell asked what woman it was Bolli wished to woo. Bolli answered, "The woman's name is Thordis, and she is the daughter of Snorri the Priest; she is the woman I have most at heart to marry; I shall be in no hurry to marry if I do not get this one for wife. And I set a very great store by this matter being carried out." Thorkell answered, "My help is quite welcome to you, my son, if you think that if I follow up this matter much weight lies thereon. I think the matter will be easily got over with Snorri, for he will know well enough how to see that a fair offer is made him by such as you." Gudrun said, "I will say at once, Thorkell, that I will let spare nothing so that Bolli may but have the match that pleases him, and that for two reasons, first, that I love him most, and then he has been the most whole-hearted of my children in doing my will." Thorkell gave it out that he was minded to furnish Bolli off handsomely. "It is what for many reasons is due to him, and I know, withal, that in Bolli a good husband will be purchased." A little while after Thorkell and Bolli went with a good many followers to Tongue. Snorri gave to them a kind and blithe welcome, and they were treated to the very best of cheers at Snorri's hands. Thordis, the daughter of Snorri, was at home with her father; she was a woman both goodly and of great parts. When they had been a few nights at Tongue Thorkell broached the wooing, bespeaking on behalf of Bolli an alliance with Snorri by marriage with Thordis, his daughter. Snorri an-

swers, "It is well you come here on this errand; it is what I might have looked for from you. I will answer the matter well, for I think Bolli one of the most hopeful of men, and that woman I deem well given in marriage who is given in marriage to him. It will, however, tell most in this matter, how far this is to Thordis' own mind; for she shall marry such a man only on whom she sets her heart." This matter coming before Thordis she answered suchwise as that therein she would lean on the foresight of her father, saying she would sooner marry Bolli, a man from within her own countryside, than a stranger from farther away. And when Snorri found that it was not against her wish to go with Bolli, the affair was settled and the betrothal took place. Snorri was to have the feast at his house about the middle of summer. With that Thorkell and Bolli rode home to Holyfell, and Bolli now stayed at home till the time of the wedding-feast. Then Thorkell and Bolli array themselves to leave home, and with them all the men who were set apart therefor, and a crowded company and the bravest band that was. They then rode on their way and came to Tongue, and had a right hearty welcome there. There were great numbers there, and the feast was of the noblest, and when the feast comes to an end the guests get ready to depart. Snorri gave honourable gifts to Thorkell, yea and to both of them, him and Gudrun, and the same to his other friends and relations. And now each one of those who had gone to the feast rode to his own home. Bolli abode at Tongue, and between him and Thordis dear love sprang speedily up. Snorri did all he could to entertain Bolli well, and to him he was even kinder than to his own children. Bolli received all this gratefully, and remained at Tongue that year in great favour. The next summer a ship came to White-river. One-half of the ship belonged to Thorleik Bollison and the other half of it belonged to some Norwegian man. When Bolli heard of the coming of his brother he rode south to Burgfirth and to the ship. The brothers greeted each other joyfully. Bolli stayed there for several nights, and then both brothers ride together west to Holyfell; Thorkell takes them in with the greatest blitheness, as did also Gudrun, and they invited Thorleik to stay with them for the winter, and that he took with thanks. Thorleik tarried at Holyfell awhile, and then he rode to White-river and lets his ship be beached and his goods be brought to the West. Thorleik had had good luck with him both as to wealth and honours, for that he had become the henchman of that noblest of lords, King Olaf. He now stayed at Holyfell through the winter, while Bolli tarried at Tongue.

Chap. LXXI: The Peace between the Sons of Bolli and the Sons of Olaf, A.D. 1026

That winter the brothers would always be meeting, having talks together, and took no pleasure in games or any other pastime; and one time, when Thorleik was at Tongue, the brothers talked day and night together. Snorri then thought he knew that they must be taking counsel together on some very great matter, so he went and joined the talk of the brothers. They greeted him well, but dropped their talk forthwith. He took their greeting well; and presently Snorri spoke: "What are you taking counsels about so that ye heed neither sleep nor meat?" Bolli answers: "This is no framing of counsels, for that talk is one of but little mark which we talk together." Now Snorri found that they wanted to hide from him all that was in their minds, yet misdoubted him, that they must be talking chiefly of things from which great troubles might arise, in case they should be carried out. He (Snorri) spoke to them: "This I misdoubt me now, that it be neither a vain thing nor a matter of jest you are talking about for such long hours together, and I hold you quite excused, even if such should be the case. Now, be so good as to tell me and not to hide it away from me. We shall not, when gathered all together, be worse able to take counsel in this matter, for that I shall nowhere stand in the way of anything going forward whereby your honour grows the greater." Thorleik thought Snorri had taken up their case in a kindly manner, and told him in a few words their wishes, and how they had made up their minds to set on the sons of Olaf, and to put them to sore penalties; they said that now they lacked of nothing to bring the sons of Olaf to terms of equality, since Thorleik was a liegeman of King Olaf, and Bolli was the son-in-law of

such a chief as Snorri was. Snorri answered in this way: "For the slaying of Bolli enough has come in return, in that the life of Helgi Hardbeinson was paid therefor; the troubles of men have been far too great already, and it is high time that now at last they be put a stop to." Bolli said, "What now, Snorri? are you less keen now to stand by us than you gave out but a little while ago? Thorleik would not have told you our mind as yet if he had first taken counsel with me thereon. And when you claim that Helgi's life has come in revenge for Bolli, it is a matter well known to men that a money fine was paid for the slaying of Helgi, while my father is still unatoned for." When Snorri saw he could not reason them into a change of mind, he offered them to try to bring about a peaceful atonement between them and the sons of Olaf, rather than that any more manslaughters should befall; and the brothers agreed to this. Then Snorri rode with some men to Herdholt. Halldor gave him a good welcome, and asked him to stay there, but Snorri said he must ride back that night. "But I have an urgent errand with you." So they fell to talking together, and Snorri made known his errand, saying it had come to his knowledge that Thorleik and Bolli would put up with it no longer that their father should be unatoned at the hands of the sons of Olaf. "And now I would endeavour to bring about peace, and see if an end cannot be put to the evil luck that besets you kinsmen." Halldor did not flatly refuse to deal further with the case. "I know only too well that Thorgils Hallason and Bolli's sons were minded to fall on me and my brothers, until you turned elsewhere their vengeance, so that thence-forward it seemed to them best to slay Helgi Hardbeinson. In these matters you have taken a good part, whatever your counsels may have been like in regard to earlier dealings between us kinsmen." Snorri said, "I set a great store by my errand turning out well and that it might be brought about which I have most at heart, that a sound peace should be settled between you kinsmen; for I know the minds of the men who have to deal with you in this case so well, that they will keep faithfully to whatever terms of peace they agree to." Halldor said, "I will undertake this, if it be the wish of my brothers, to pay money for the slaying of Bolli, such as shall be awarded by the umpires chosen, but I bargain that there be no outlawing of anybody concerned, nor forfeiture of my chieftainship or estate; the same claim I make in respect of the estates my brothers are possessed of, and I make a point of their being left free owners thereof whatever be the close of this case, each side to choose their own umpire." Snorri answered, "This is offered well and frankly, and the brothers will take this choice if they are willing to set any store by my counsel." Thereupon Snorri rode home and told the brothers the outcome of his errand, and that he would keep altogether aloof from their case if they would not agree to this. Bolli bade him have his own way, "And I wish that you, Snorri, be umpire on our behalf." Then Snorri sent to Halldor to say that peaceful settlement was agreed to, and he bade them choose an umpire against himself. Halldor chose on his behalf Steinthor Thorlakson of Eyr. The peace meeting should be at Drangar on Shawstrand, when four weeks of summer were passed. Thorleik Bollison rode to Holyfell, and nothing to tell tidings of befall that winter, and when time wore unto the hour bespoken for the meeting, Snorri the Priest came there with the sons of Bolli, fifteen together in all; Steinthor and his came with the same number of men to the meeting. Snorri and Steinthor talked together and came to an agreement about these matters. After that they gave out the award, but it is not told how much money they awarded; this, however, is told, that the money was readily paid and the peace well holden to. At the Thorsness Thing the fines were paid out; Halldor gave Bolli a good sword, and Steinthor Olafson gave Thorleik a shield, which was also a good gift. Then the Thing was broken up, and both sides were thought to have gained in esteem from these affairs.

Chap. LXXII: Bolli and Thorleik go abroad, A. D. 1029

After the peace between Bolli and Thorleik and the sons of Olaf had been settled and Thorleik had been one winter in Iceland, Bolli made it known that he was minded to go abroad. Snorri, dissuading him, said, "To us it seems there is a great risk to be run as to

how you may speed; but if you wish to have in hand more than you have now, I will get you a manor and stock it for you; therewithal I shall hand over to you chieftainship over men and uphold you for honours in all things; and that, I know, will be easy, seeing that most men bear you good-will." Bolli said, "I have long had it in my mind to go for once into southern lands; for a man is deemed to grow benighted if he learns to know nothing farther afield than what is to be seen here in Iceland." And when Snorri saw that Bolli had set his mind on this, and that it would come to nought to try to stop him, he bade him take as much money as he liked for his journey. Bolli was all for having plenty of money, "for I will not," he said, "be beholden to any man either here or in any foreign land." Then Bolli rode south to Burgfirth to White-river and bought half of a ship from the owners, so that he and his brother became joint owners of the same ship. Bolli then rides west again to his home. He and Thordis had one daughter whose name was Herdis, and that maiden Gudrun asked to bring up. She was one year old when she went to Holyfell. Thordis also spent a great deal of her time there, for Gudrun was very fond of her.

Chap. LXXIII: Bolli's Voyage

Now the brothers went both to their ship. Bolli took a great deal of money abroad with him. They now arrayed the ship, and when everything was ready they put out to sea. The winds did not speed them fast, and they were a long time out at sea, but got to Norway in the autumn, and made Thrandheim in the north. Olaf, the king, was in the east part of the land, in the Wick, where he had made ingatherings for a stay through the winter. And when the brothers heard that the king would not come north to Thrandheim that autumn, Thorleik said he would go east along the land to meet King Olaf. Bolli said, "I have little wish to drift about between market towns in autumn days; to me that is too much of worry and restraint. I will rather stay for the winter in this town. I am told the king will come north in the spring, and if he does not then I shall not set my face against our going to meet him." Bolli has his way in the matter, and they put up their ship and got their winter quarters. It was soon seen that Bolli was a very pushing man, and would be the first among other men; and in that he had his way, for a bounteous man was he, and so got speedily to be highly thought of in Norway. Bolli kept a suite about him during the winter at Thrandheim, and it was easily seen, when he went to the guild meeting-places, that his men were both better arrayed as to raiment and weapons than other townspeople. He alone also paid for all his suite when they sat drinking in guild halls, and on a par with this were his openhandedness and lordly ways in other matters. Now the brothers stay in the town through the winter. That winter the king sat east in Sarpsborg, and news spread from the east that the king was not likely to come north. Early in the spring the brothers got their ship ready and went east along the land. The journey sped well for them, and they got east to Sarpsborg, and went forthwith to meet King Olaf. The king gave a good welcome to Thorleik, his henchman, and his followers. Then the king asked who was that man of stately gait in the train of Thorleik; and Thorleik answered, "He is my brother, and is named Bolli." "He looks, indeed, a man of high mettle," said the king. Thereupon the king asks the brothers to come and stay with him, and that offer they took with thanks, and spend the spring with the king. The king was as kind to Thorleik as he had been before, yet he held Bolli by much in greater esteem, for he deemed him even peerless among men. And as the spring went on, the brothers took counsel together about their journeys. And Thorleik asked Bolli if he was minded to go back to Iceland during the summer, "or will you stay on longer here in Norway?" Bolli answered, "I do not mean to do either. And sooth to say, when I left Iceland, my thought was settled on this, that people should not be asking for news of me from the house next door; and now I wish, brother, that you take over our ship." Thorleik took it much to heart that they should have to part. "But you, Bolli, will have your way in this as in other things." Their matter thus bespoken they laid before the king, and he answered thus: "Will you not tarry with us any longer, Bolli?" said the king. "I should have liked it best for you to stay with me for a while, for I shall grant you the same title that I granted to

Thorleik, your brother." Then Bolli answered: "I should be only too glad to bind myself to be your henchman, but I must go first whither I am already bent, and have long been eager to go, but this choice I will gladly take if it be fated to me to come back." "You will have your way as to your journeyings, Bolli," says the king, "for you Icelanders are self-willed in most matters. But with this word I must close, that I think you, Bolli, the man of greatest mark that has ever come from Iceland in my days." And when Bolli had got the king's leave he made ready for his journey, and went on board a round ship that was bound south for Denmark. He also took a great deal of money with him, and sundry of his followers bore him company. He and King Olaf parted in great friendship, and the king gave Bolli some handsome gifts at parting. Thorleik remained behind with King Olaf, but Bolli went on his way till he came south to Denmark. That winter he tarried in Denmark, and had great honour there of mighty men; nor did he bear himself there in any way less lordly than while he was in Norway. When Bolli had been a winter in Denmark he started on his journey out into foreign countries, and did not halt in his journey till he came to Micklegarth (Constantinople). He was there only a short time before he got himself into the Varangian Guard, and, from what we have heard, no Northman had ever gone to take war-pay from the Garth king before Bolli, Bolli's son. He tarried in Micklegarth very many winters, and was thought to be the most valiant in all deeds that try a man, and always went next to those in the forefront. The Varangians accounted Bolli most highly of whilst he was with them in Micklegarth.

Chap. LXXIV: Thorkell Eyjolfson goes to Norway

Now the tale is to be taken up again where Thorkell Eyjolfson sits at home in lordly way. His and Gudrun's son, Gellir, grew up there at home, and was early both a manly fellow and winning. It is said how once upon a time Thorkell told Gudrun a dream he had had. "I dreamed," he said, "that I had so great a beard that it spread out over the whole of Broadfirth." Thorkell bade her read his dream. Gudrun said, "What do you think this dream betokens?" He said, "To me it seems clear that in it is hinted that my power will stand wide about the whole of Broadfirth." Gudrun said, "Maybe that such is the meaning of it, but I rather should think that thereby is betokened that you will dip your beard down into Broadfirth." That same summer Thorkell runs out his ship and gets it ready for Norway. His son, Gellir, was then twelve winters old, and he went abroad with his father. Thorkell makes it known that he means to fetch timber to build his church with, and sails forthwith into the main sea when he was ready. He had an easy voyage of it, but not a very short one, and they hove into Norway northwardly. King Olaf then had his seat in Thrandheim, and Thorkell sought forthwith a meeting with King Olaf, and his son Gellir with him. They had there a good welcome. So highly was Thorkell accounted of that winter by the king, that all folk tell that the king gave him not less than one hundred marks of refined silver. The king gave to Gellir at Yule a cloak, the most precious and excellent of gifts. That winter King Olaf had a church built in the town of timber, and it was a very great minster, all materials thereto being chosen of the best. In the spring the timber which the king gave to Thorkell was brought on board ship, and large was that timber and good in kind, for Thorkell looked closely after it. Now it happened one morning early that the king went out with but few men, and saw a man up on the church which then was being built in the town. He wondered much at this, for it was a good deal earlier than the smiths were wont to be up. Then the king recognised the man, and, lo! there was Thorkell Eyjolfson taking the measure of all the largest timber, crossbeams, sills, and pillars. The king turned at once thither, and said: "What now, Thorkell, do you mean after these measurements to shape the church timber which you are taking to Iceland?" "Yes, in truth, sire," said Thorkell. Then said King Olaf, "Cut two ells off every main beam, and that church will yet be the largest built in Iceland." Thorkell answered, "Keep your timber yourself if you think you have given me too much, or your hand itches to take it back, but not an ell's length shall I cut off it. I shall both know how to go about and how to carry out getting

other timber for me.” Then says the king most calmly, “So it is, Thorkell, that you are not only a man of much account, but you are also now making yourself too big, for, to be sure, it is too overweening for the son of a mere peasant to try to vie with us. But it is not true that I begrudge you the timber, if only it be fated to you to build a church therewith; for it will never be large enough for all your pride to find room to lie inside it. But near it comes to the foreboding of my mind, that the timber will be of little use to men, and that it will be far from you ever to get any work by man done with this timber.” After that they ceased talking, and the king turned away, and it was marked by people that it disliked him how Thorkell accounted as of nought what he said. Yet the king himself did not let people get the wind of it, and he and Thorkell parted in great good-will. Thorkell got on board his ship and put to sea. They had a good wind, and were not long out about the main. Thorkell brought his ship to Ramfirth, and rode soon from his ship home to Holyfell, where all folk were glad to see him. In this journey Thorkell had gained much honour. He had his ship hauled ashore and made snug, and the timber for the church he gave to a caretaker, where it was safely bestowed, for it could not be brought from the north this autumn, as he was at all time full of business. Thorkell now sits at home at his manor throughout the winter. He had Yule-drinking at Holyfell, and to it there came a crowd of people; and altogether he kept up a great state that winter. Nor did Gudrun stop him therein; for she said the use of money was that people should increase their state therewith; moreover, whatever Gudrun must needs be supplied with for all purposes of high-minded display, that (she said) would be readily forthcoming (from her husband). Thorkell shared that winter amongst his friends many precious things he had brought with him out to Iceland.

Chap. LXXV: Thorkell and Thorstein and Halldor Olafson, A.D. 1026

That winter after Yule Thorkell got ready to go from home north to Ramfirth to bring his timber from the north. He rode first up into the Dales and then to Lea-shaws to Thorstein, his kinsman, where he gathered together men and horses. He afterwards went north to Ramfirth and stayed there awhile, taken up with the business of his journey, and gathered to him horses from about the firth, for he did not want to make more than one journey of it, if that could be managed. But this did not speed swiftly, and Thorkell was busy at this work even into Lent. At last he got under way with the work, and had the wood dragged from the north by more than twenty horses, and had the timber stacked on Lea-Eyr, meaning later on to bring it in a boat out to Holyfell. Thorstein owned a large ferry-boat, and this boat Thorkell was minded to use for his homeward voyage. Thorkell stayed at Lea-shaws through Lent, for there was dear friendship between these kinsmen. Thorstein said one day to Thorkell, they had better go to Herdholt, “for I want to make a bid for some land from Halldor, he having but little money since he paid the brothers the wergild for their father, and the land being just what I want most.” Thorkell bade him do as he liked; so they left home a party of twenty men together. They come to Herdholt, and Halldor gave them good welcome, and was most free of talk with them. There were few men at home, for Halldor had sent his men north to Steingrims-firth, as a whale had come ashore there in which he owned a share. Beiner the Strong was at home, the only man now left alive of those who had been there with Olaf, the father of Halldor. Halldor had said to Beiner at once when he saw Thorstein and Thorkell riding up, “I can easily see what the errand of these kinsmen is—they are going to make me a bid for my land, and if that is the case they will call me aside for a talk; I guess they will seat themselves each on either side of me; so, then, if they should give me any trouble you must not be slower to set on Thorstein than I on Thorkell. You have long been true to us kinsfolk. I have also sent to the nearest homesteads for men, and at just the same moment I should like these two things to happen: the coming in of the men summoned, and the breaking up of our talk.” Now as the day wore on, Thorstein hinted to Halldor that they should all go aside and have some talk together. “for we have an errand with you.” Halldor said it suited him well. Thorstein

told his followers they need not come with them, but Beiner went with them none the less, for he thought things came to pass very much after what Halldor had guessed they would. They went very far out into the field. Halldor had on a pinned-up cloak with a long pin brooch, as was the fashion then. Halldor sat down on the field, but on either side of him each of these kinsmen, so near that they sat well-nigh on his cloak; but Beiner stood over them with a big axe in his hand. Then said Thorstein, “My errand here is that I wish to buy land from you, and I bring it before you now because my kinsman Thorkell is with me; I should think that this would suit us both well, for I hear that you are short of money, while your land is costly to husband. I will give you in return an estate that will beseech you, and into the bargain as much as we shall agree upon.” In the beginning Halldor took the matter as if it were not so very far from his mind, and they exchanged words concerning the terms of the purchase; and when they felt that he was not so far from coming to terms, Thorkell joined eagerly in the talk, and tried to bring the bargain to a point. Then Halldor began to draw back rather, but they pressed him all the more; yet at last it came to this, that he was the further from the bargain the closer they pressed him. Then said Thorkell, “Do you not see, kinsman Thorstein, how this is going? Halldor has delayed the matter for us all day long, and we have sat here listening to his fooling and wiles. Now if you want to buy the land we must come to closer quarters.” Thorstein then said he must know what he had to look forward to, and bade Halldor now come out of the shadow as to whether he was willing to come to the bargain. Halldor answered, “I do not think I need keep you in the dark as to this point, that you will have to go home to-night without any bargain struck.” Then said Thorstein, “Nor do I think it needful to delay making known to you what we have in our mind to do; for we, deeming that we shall get the better of you by reason of the odds on our side, have bethought us of two choices for you: one choice is, that you do this matter willingly and take in return our friendship; but the other, clearly a worse one, is, that you now stretch out your hand against your own will and sell me the land of Herdholt.” But when Thorstein spoke in this outrageous manner, Halldor leapt up so suddenly that the brooch was torn from his cloak, and said, “Something else will happen before I utter that which is not my will.” “What is that?” said Thorstein. “A pole-axe will stand on your head from one of the worst of men, and thus cast down your insolence and unfairness.” Thorkell answered, “That is an evil prophecy, and I hope it will not be fulfilled; and now I think there is ample cause why you, Halldor, should give up your land and have nothing for it.” Then Halldor answered, “Sooner you will be embracing the sea-tangle in Broadfirth than I sell my land against my own will.” Halldor went home after that, and the men he had sent for came crowding up to the place. Thorstein was of the wrothest, and wanted forthwith to make an onset on Halldor. Thorkell bade him not to do so, “for that is the greatest enormity at such a season as this; but when this season wears off, I shall not stand in the way of his and ours clashing together.” Halldor said he was given to think he would not fail in being ready for them. After that they rode away and talked much together of this their journey; and Thorstein, speaking thereof, said that, truth to tell, their journey was most wretched. “But why, kinsman Thorkell, were you so afraid of falling on Halldor and putting him to some shame?” Thorkell answered, “Did you not see Beiner, who stood over you with the axe reared aloft? Why, it was an utter folly, for forthwith on seeing me likely to do anything, he would have driven that axe into your head.” They rode now home to Lea-shaws; and Lent wears and Passion Week sets in.

Chap. LXXVI: The Drowning of Thorkell, A.D. 1026

On Maundy Thursday, early in the morning, Thorkell got ready for his journey. Thorstein set himself much against it: “For the weather looks to me uncertain,” said he. Thorkell said the weather would do all right. “And you must not hinder me now, kinsman, for I wish to be home before Easter.” So now Thorkell ran out the ferry-boat, and loaded it. But Thorstein carried the lading ashore from out the boat as fast as Thorkell and his followers put it on

board. Then Thorkell said, "Give over now, kinsman, and do not hinder our journey this time; you must not have your own way in this." Thorstein said, "He of us two will now follow the counsel that will answer the worst, for this journey will cause the happening of great matters." Thorkell now bade them farewell till their next meeting, and Thorstein went home, and was exceedingly downcast. He went to the guest-house, and bade them lay a pillow under his head, the which was done. The servant-maid saw how the tears ran down upon the pillow from his eyes. And shortly afterwards a roaring blast struck the house, and Thorstein said, "There, we now can hear roaring the slayer of kinsman Thorkell." Now to tell of the journey of Thorkell and his company: they sail this day out, down Broadfirth, and were ten on board. The wind began to blow very high, and rose to full gale before it blew over. They pushed on their way briskly, for the men were most plucky. Thorkell had with him the sword Skofnung, which was laid in the locker. Thorkell and his party sailed till they came to Bjorn's isle, and people could watch them journey from both shores. But when they had come thus far, suddenly a squall caught the sail and overwhelmed the boat. There Thorkell was drowned and all the men who were with him. The timber drifted ashore wide about the islands, the corner-staves (pillars) drove ashore in the island called Staff-isle. Skofnung stuck fast to the timbers of the boat, and was found in Skofnungs-isle. That same evening that Thorkell and his followers were drowned, it happened at Holyfell that Gudrun went to the church, when other people had gone to bed, and when she stepped into the lich-gate she saw a ghost standing before her. He bowed over her and said, "Great tidings, Gudrun." She said, "Hold then your peace about them, wretch." Gudrun went on to the church, as she had meant to do, and when she got up to the church she thought she saw that Thorkell and his companions were come home and stood before the door of the church, and she saw that water was running off their clothes. Gudrun did not speak to them, but went into the church, and stayed there as long as it seemed good to her. After that she went to the guest-room, for she thought Thorkell and his followers must have gone there; but when she came into the chamber, there was no one there. Then Gudrun was struck with wonder at the whole affair. On Good Friday Gudrun sent her men to find out matters concerning the journeying of Thorkell and his company, some up to Shawstrand and some out to the islands. By then the flotsam had already come to land wide about the islands and on both shores of the firth. The Saturday before Easter the tidings got known and great news they were thought to be, for Thorkell had been a great chieftain. Thorkell was eight-and-forty years old when he was drowned, and that was four winters before Olaf the Holy fell. Gudrun took much to heart the death of Thorkell, yet bore her bereavement bravely. Only very little of the church timber could ever be gathered in. Gellir was now fourteen years old, and with his mother he took over the business of the household and the chieftainship. It was soon seen that he was made to be a leader of men. Gudrun now became a very religious woman. She was the first woman in Iceland who knew the Psalter by heart. She would spend long time in the church at nights saying her prayers, and Herdis, Bolli's daughter, always went with her at night. Gudrun loved Herdis very much. It is told that one night the maiden Herdis dreamed that a woman came to her who was dressed in a woven cloak, and coiled in a head cloth, but she did not think the woman winning to look at. She spoke, "Tell your grandmother that I am displeased with her, for she creeps about over me every night, and lets fall down upon me drops so hot that I am burning all over from them. My reason for letting you know this is, that I like you somewhat better, though there is something uncanny hovering about you too. However, I could get on with you if I did not feel there was so much more amiss with Gudrun." Then Herdis awoke and told Gudrun her dream. Gudrun thought the apparition was of good omen. Next morning Gudrun had planks taken up from the church floor where she was wont to kneel on the hassock, and she had the earth dug up, and they found blue and evil-looking bones, a round brooch, and a wizard's wand, and men thought they knew then that a tomb of some sorceress must have been there; so the bones were taken to a place far away where people were least likely to be passing.

Chap. LXXVII: The Return of Bolli, A.D. 1030

When four winters were passed from the drowning of Thorkell Eyjolfson a ship came into Islefirth belonging to Bolli Bollison, most of the crew of which were Norwegians. Bolli brought out with him much wealth, and many precious things that lords abroad had given him. Bolli was so great a man for show when he came back from this journey that he would wear no clothes but of scarlet and fur, and all his weapons were bedight with gold: he was called Bolli the Grand. He made it known to his shipmasters that he was going west to his own countrysides, and he left his ship and goods in the hands of his crew. Bolli rode from the ship with twelve men, and all his followers were dressed in scarlet, and rode on gilt saddles, and all were they a trusty band, though Bolli was peerless among them. He had on the clothes of fur which the Garth-king had given him, he had over all a scarlet cape; and he had Footbiter girt on him, the hilt of which was dight with gold, and the grip woven with gold; he had a gilded helmet on his head, and a red shield on his flank, with a knight painted on it in gold. He had a dagger in his hand, as is the custom in foreign lands; and whenever they took quarters the women paid heed to nothing but gazing at Bolli and his grandeur, and that of his followers. In this state Bolli rode into the western parts all the way till he came to Holyfell with his following. Gudrun was very glad to see her son. Bolli did not stay there long till he rode up to Sælingsdale Tongue to see Snorri, his father-in-law, and his wife Thordis, and their meeting was exceeding joyful. Snorri asked Bolli to stay with him with as many of his men as he liked. Bolli accepted the invitation gratefully, and was with Snorri all the winter, with the men who had ridden from the north with him. Bolli got great renown from this journey. Snorri made it no less his business now to treat Bolli with every kindness than when he was with him before.

Chap. LXXVIII: The Death of Snorri, and the End, A.D. 1031

When Bolli had been one winter in Iceland Snorri the Priest fell ill. That illness did not gain quickly on him, and Snorri lay very long abed. But when the illness gained on him, he called to himself all his kinsfolk and affinity, and said to Bolli, "It is my wish that you shall take over the manor here and the chieftainship after my day, for I grudge honours to you no more than to my own sons, nor is there within this land now the one of my sons who I think will be the greatest man among them, Halldor to wit." Thereupon Snorri breathed his last, being seventy-seven years old. That was one winter after the fall of St. Olaf, so said Ari the Priest "Deep-in-lore." Snorri was buried at Tongue. Bolli and Thordis took over the manor of Tongue as Snorri had willed it, and Snorri's sons put up with it with a good will. Bolli grew a man of great account, and was much beloved. Herdis, Bolli's daughter, grew up at Holyfell, and was the goodliest of all women. Orm, the son of Hermund, the son of Illugi, asked her in marriage, and she was given in wedlock to him; their son was Kodran, who had for wife Gudrun, the daughter of Sigmund. The son of Kodran was Hermund, who had for wife Ulfeid, the daughter of Runolf, who was the son of Bishop Kelill; their sons were Kelill, who was Abbot of Holyfell, and Reinn and Kodran and Styrmir; their daughter was Thorvor, whom Skeggi, Bard's son, had for wife, and from whom is come the stock of the Shaw-men. Ospak was the name of the son of Bolli and Thordis. The daughter of Ospak was Gudrun, whom Thorarin, Brand's son, had to wife. Their son was Brand, who founded the benefice of Housefell. Gellir, Thoreik's son, took to him a wife, and married Valgerd, daughter of Thorgils Arison of Reekness. Gellir went abroad, and took service with King Magnus the Good, and had given him by the king twelve ounces of gold and many goods besides. The sons of Gellir were Thorkell and Thorgils, and a son of Thorgils was Ari the "Deep-in-lore." The son of Ari was named Thorgils, and his son was Ari the Strong. Now Gudrun began to grow very old, and lived in such sorrow and grief as has lately been told. She was the first nun and recluse in Iceland, and by all folk it is said that Gudrun was the noblest of women of equal birth with her in this land. It is told how once upon a time Bolli came to Holyfell, for Gudrun was always very

pleased when he came to see her, and how he sat by his mother for a long time, and they talked of many things. Then Bolli said, "Will you tell me, mother, what I want very much to know? Who is the man you have loved the most?" Gudrun answered, "Thorkell was the mightiest man and the greatest chief, but no man was more shapely or better endowed all round than Bolli. Thord, son of Ingun, was the wisest of them all, and the greatest lawyer; Thorvald I take no account of." Then said Bolli, "I clearly understand that what you tell me shows how each of your husbands was endowed, but you have not told me yet whom you loved the best. Now there is no need for you to keep that hidden any longer." Gudrun answered, "You press me hard, my son, for this, but if I must needs tell it to any one, you are the one I should first choose thereto." Bolli bade her do so. Then Gudrun said, "To him I was worst whom I loved best." "Now," answered Bolli, "I think the whole truth is told," and said she had done well to tell him what he so much had yearned to know. Gudrun grew to be a very old woman, and some say she lost her sight. Gudrun died at Holyfell, and there she rests. Gellir, Thorkell's son, lived at Holyfell to old age, and many things of much account are told of him; he also comes into many Sagas, though but little be told of him here. He built a church at Holyfell, a very stately one, as Arnor, the Earls' poet, says in the funeral song which he wrote about Gellir, wherein he uses clear words about that matter. When Gellir was somewhat sunk into his latter age, he prepared himself for a journey away from Iceland. He went to Norway, but did not stay there long, and then left straightway that land and "walked" south to Rome to "see the holy apostle Peter." He was very long over this journey; and then journeying from the south he came into Denmark, and there he fell ill and lay in bed a very long time, and received all the last rites of the church, whereupon he died, and he rests at Roskild. Gellir had taken Skofnung with him, the sword that had been taken out of the barrow of Holy Kraki, and never after could it be got back. When the death of Gellir was known in Iceland, Thorkell, his son, took over his father's inheritance at Holyfell. Thorgils, another of Gellir's sons, was drowned in Broadfirth at an early age, with all hands on board. Thorkell Gellirson was a most learned man, and was said to be of all men the best stocked of lore. Here is the end of the Saga of the men of Salmon-river-Dale.

Völsunga Saga

CHAPTER I. Of Sigi, the Son of Odin.

Here begins the tale, and tells of a man who was named Sigi, and called of men the son of Odin; another man withal is told of in the tale, hight Skadi, a great man and mighty of his hands; yet was Sigi the mightier and the higher of kin, according to the speech of men of that time. Now Skadi had a thrall with whom the story must deal somewhat, Bredi by name, who was called after that work which he had to do; in prowess and might of hand he was equal to men who were held more worthy, yea, and better than some thereof.

Now it is to be told that, on a time, Sigi fared to the hunting of the deer, and the thrall with him; and they hunted deer day-long till the evening; and when they gathered together their prey in the evening, lo, greater and more by far was that which Bredi had slain than Sigi's prey; and this thing he much disliked, and he said that great wonder it was that a very thrall should out-do him in the hunting of deer: so he fell on him and slew him, and buried the body of him thereafter in a snow-drift.

Then he went home at evening tide and says that Bredi had ridden away from him into the wild-wood. "Soon was he out of my sight," he says, "and naught more I wot of him."

Skadi misdoubted the tale of Sigi, and deemed that this was a guile of his, and that he would have slain Bredi. So he sent men to seek for him, and to such an end came their seeking, that they found him in a certain snow-drift; then said Skadi, that men should call that snow-drift Bredi's Drift from henceforth; and thereafter have folk followed, so that in such wise they call every drift that is right great.

Thus it is well seen that Sigi has slain the thrall and murdered him; so he is given forth to be a wolf in holy places, and may no more abide in the land with his father; therewith Odin bare him fellowship from the land, so long a way, that right long it was, and made no stay till he brought him to certain war-ships. So Sigi falls to lying out a-warring with the strength that his father gave him or ever they parted; and happy was he in his warring, and ever prevailed, till he brought it about that he won by his wars land and lordship at the last; and thereupon he took to him a noble wife, and became a great and mighty king, and ruled over the land of the Huns, and was the greatest of warriors. He had a son by his wife, who was called Refir, who grew up in his father's house, and soon became great of growth, and shapely.

CHAPTER II. Of the Birth of Volsung, the Son of Refir, who was the Son of Sigi.

Now Sigi grew old, and had many to envy him, so that at last those turned against him whom he trusted most; yea, even the brothers of his wife; for these fell on him at his unwariest, when there were few with him to withstand them, and brought so many against him, that they prevailed against him, and there fell Sigi and all his folk with him. But Refir, his son, was not in this trouble, and he brought together so mighty a strength of his friends and the great men of the land, that he got to himself both the lands and kingdom of Sigi his father; and so now, when he deems that the feet under him stand firm in his rule, then he calls to mind that which he had against his mother's brothers, who had slain his father. So the king gathers together a mighty army, and therewith falls on his kinsmen, deeming that if he made their kinship of small account,

yet none the less they had first wrought evil against him. So he wrought his will herein, in that he departed not from strife before he had slain all his father's banesmen, though dreadful the deed seemed in every wise. So now he gets land, lordship, and fee, and is become a mightier man than his father before him.

Much wealth won in war gat Refir to himself, and wedded a wife withal, such as he deemed meet for him, and long they lived together, but had no child to take the heritage after them; and ill-content they both were with that, and prayed the Gods with heart and soul that they might get them a child. And so it is said that Odin hears their prayer, and Freyia no less hearkens wherewith they prayed unto her: so she, never lacking for all good counsel, calls to her her casket-bearing may, the daughter of Hrimnir the giant, and sets an apple in her hand, and bids her bring it to the king. She took the apple, and did on her the gear of a crow, and went flying till she came whereas the king sat on a mound, and there she let the apple fall into the lap of the king; but he took the apple, and deemed he knew whereto it would avail; so he goes home from the mound to his own folk, and came to the queen, and some deal of that apple she ate.

So, as the tale tells, the queen soon knew that she big with child, but a long time wore or ever she might give birth to the child: so it befell that the king must needs go to the wars, after the custom of kings, that he may keep his own land in peace: and in this journey it came to pass that Refir fell sick and got his death, being minded to go home to Odin, a thing much desired of many folk in those days.

Now no otherwise it goes with the queen's sickness than heretofore, nor may she be the lighter of her child, and six winters wore away with the sickness still heavy on her; so that at the last she feels that she may not live long; wherefore now she bade cut the child from out of her; and it was done even as she bade; a man-child was it, and great of growth from his birth, as might well be; and they say that the youngling kissed his mother or ever she died; but to him is a name given, and he is called Volsung; and he was king over Hunland in the room of his father. From his early years he was big and strong, and full of daring in all manly deeds and trials, and he became the greatest of warriors, and of good hap in all the battles of his warfaring.

Now when he was fully come to man's estate, Hrimnir the giant sends to him Ljod his daughter; she of whom the tale told, that she brought the apple to Refir, Volsung's father. So Volsung weds her withal; and long they abode together with good hap and great love. They had ten sons and one daughter, and their eldest son was hight Sigmund, and their daughter Signy; and these two were twins, and in all wise the foremost and the fairest of the children of Volsung the king, and mighty, as all his seed was; even as has been long told from ancient days, and in tales of long ago, with the greatest fame of all men, how that the Volsungs have been great men and high-minded and far above the most of men both in cunning and in prowess and all things high and mighty.

So says the story that king Volsung let build a noble hall in such a wise, that a big oak-tree stood therein, and that the limbs of the tree blossomed fair out over the roof of the hall, while below stood the trunk within it, and the said trunk did men call Branstock.

CHAPTER III. Of the Sword that Sigmund, Volsung's son, drew from the Branstock.

There was a king called Siggeir, who ruled over Gothland, a mighty king and of many folk; he went to meet Volsung, the king, and prayed him for Signy his daughter to wife; and the king took his talk well, and his sons withal, but she was loth thereto, yet she bade her father rule in this as in all other things that concerned her; so the king took such rede that he gave her to him, and she was betrothed to King Siggeir; and for the fulfilling of the feast and the wedding, was King Siggeir to come to the house of King Volsung. The king got ready the feast according to his best might, and when all things were ready, came the king's guests and King Siggeir withal at the day appointed, and many a man of great account had Siggeir with him.

The tale tells that great fires were made endlong the hall, and the great tree aforesaid stood midmost thereof; withal folk say that, whenas men sat by the fires in the evening, a certain man came into the hall unknown of aspect to all men; and suchlike array he had, that over him was a spotted cloak, and he was bare-foot, and had linen-breeches knit tight even unto the bone, and he had a sword in his hand as he went up to the Branstock, and a slouched hat upon his head: huge he was, and seeming-ancient, and one-eyed. So he drew his sword and smote it into the tree-trunk so that it sank in up to the hilts; and all held back from greeting the man. Then he took up the word, and said—

"Whoso draweth this sword from this stock, shall have the same as a gift from me, and shall find in good sooth that never bare he better sword in hand than is this."

Therewith out went the old man from the hall, and none knew who he was or whither he went.

Now men stand up, and none would fain be the last to lay hand to the sword, for they deemed that he would have the best of it who might first touch it; so all the noblest went thereto first, and then the others, one after other; but none who came thereto might avail to pull it out, for in nowise would it come away howsoever they tugged at it; but now up comes Sigmund, King Volsung's son, and sets hand to the sword, and pulls it from the stock, even as if it lay loose before him; so good that weapon seemed to all, that none thought he had seen such a sword before, and Siggeir would fain buy it of him at thrice its weight of gold, but Sigmund said—

"Thou mightest have taken the sword no less than I from there whereas it stood, if it had been thy lot to bear it; but now, since it has first of all fallen into my hand, never shalt thou have it, though thou biddest therefor all the gold thou hast."

King Siggeir grew wroth at these words, and deemed Sigmund had answered him scornfully, but whereas was a wary man and a double-dealing, he made as if he heeded this matter in nowise, yet that same evening he thought how he might reward it, as was well seen afterwards.

CHAPTER IV. How King Siggeir wedded Signy, and bade King Volsung and his son to Gothland.

Now it is to be told that Siggeir goes to bed by Signy that night, and the next morning the weather was fair; then says King Siggeir that he will not bide, lest the wind should wax, or the sea grow impassable; nor is it said that Volsung or his sons letted him herein, and that the less, because they saw that he was fain to get him gone from the feast. But now says Signy to her father—

"I have no will to go away with Seggeir; neither does my heart smile upon him, and I wot; by my fore-knowledge, and from the fetch of our kin, that from this counsel will great evil fall on us if this wedding be not speedily undone."

"Speak in no such wise, daughter!" said he, "for great shame will it be to him, yea, and to us also, to break troth with him, he being sackless; and in naught may we trust him, and no friendship shall we have of him, if these matters are broken off; but he will pay us back in as evil wise as he may; for that alone is seemly, to hold truly to troth given."

So King Siggeir got ready for home, and before he went from the feast he bade King Volsung, his father-in-law, come see him in

Gothland, and all his sons with him, whenas three months should be overpast, and to bring such following with him, as he would have; and as he deemed meet for his honour; and thereby will Siggeir the king pay back for the shortcomings of the wedding-feast, in that he would abide thereat but one night only, a thing not according to the wont of men. So King Volsung gave word to come on the day named, and the kinsmen-in-law parted, and Siggeir went home with his wife.

CHAPTER V. Of the Slaying of King Volsung.

Now tells the tale of King Volsung and his sons that they go at the time appointed to Gothland at the bidding of King Siggeir, and put off from the land in three ships, all well manned, and have a fair voyage, and made Gothland late of an evening tide.

But that same night came Signy and called her father and brothers to a privy talk, and told them what she deemed King Siggeir was minded to do, and how that he had drawn together an army no man may meet. "And," says she, "he is minded to do guilefully by you; wherefore I bid you get ye gone back again to your own land, and gather together the mightiest power ye may, and then come back hither and avenge you; neither go ye now to your undoing, for ye shall surely fail not to fall by his wiles if ye turn not on him even as I bid you."

Then spake Volsung the king, "All people and nations shall tell of the word I spake, yet being unborn, wherein I vowed a vow that I would flee in fear from neither fire nor the sword; even so have I done hitherto, and shall I depart therefrom now I am old? Yea withal never shall the maidens mock these my sons at the games, and cry out at them that they fear death; once alone must all men need die, and from that season shall none escape; so my rede is that we flee nowhither, but do the work of our hands in as manly wise as we may; a hundred fights have I fought, and whiles I had more, and whiles I had less, and yet ever had I the victory, nor shall it ever be heard tell of me that I fled away or prayed for peace."

Then Signy wept right sore, and prayed that she might not go back to King Siggeir, but King Volsung answered—

"Thou shalt surely go back to thine husband, and abide with him, howsoever it fares with us."

So Signy went home, and they abode there that night; but in the morning, as soon as it was day, Volsung bade his men arise and go aland and make them ready for battle; so they went aland, all of them all-armed, and had not long to wait before Siggeir fell on them with all his army, and the fiercest fight there was betwixt them; and Siggeir cried on his men to the onset all he might; and so the tale tells that King Volsung and his sons went eight times right through Siggeir's folk that day, smiting and hewing on either hand, but when they would do so even once again, King Volsung fell amidst his folk and all his men withal, saving his ten sons, for mightier was the power against them than they might withstand.

But now are all his sons taken, and laid in bonds and led away; and Signy was ware withal that her father was slain, and her brothers taken and doomed to death; that she called King Siggeir apart to talk with her, and said—

"This will I pray of thee, that thou let not slay my brothers hastily, but let them be set awhile in the stocks, for home to me comes the saw that says, "Sweet to eye while seen": but longer life I pray not for them, because I wot well that my prayer will not avail me."

Then answered Siggeir:

"Surely thou art mad and witless, praying thus for more bale for thy brothers than their present slaying; yet this will I grant thee, for the better it likes me the more they must bear, and the longer their pain is or ever death come to them."

Now he let it be done even as she prayed, and a mighty beam was brought and set on the feet of those ten brethren in a certain place of the wild-wood, and there they sit day-long until night; but at midnight, as they sat in the stocks, there came on them a she-wolf from out the wood; old she was, and both great and evil of aspect; and the first thing she did was to bite one of those brethren till he died, and then she ate him up withal, and went on her way.

But the next morning Signy sent a man to the brethren, even one whom she most trusted, to wot of the tidings; and when he came back he told her that one of them was dead, and great and grievous she deemed it, if they should all fare in like wise, and yet naught might she avail them.

Soon is the tale told thereof: nine nights together came the she-wolf at midnight, and each night slew and ate up one of the brethren, until all were dead, save Sigmund only; so now, before the tenth night came, Signy sent that trusty man to Sigmund, her brother, and gave honey into his hand, bidding him do it over Sigmund's face, and set a little deal of it in his mouth; so he went to Sigmund and did as he was bidden, and then came home again; and so the next night came the she-wolf according to her wont, and would slay him and eat him even as his brothers; but now she sniffs the breeze from him, whereas he was anointed with the honey, and licks his face all over with her tongue, and then thrusts her tongue into the mouth of him. No fear he had thereof, but caught the she-wolf's tongue betwixt his teeth, and so hard she started back thereat, and pulled herself away so mightily, setting her feet against the stocks, that all was riven asunder; but he ever held so fast that the tongue came away by the roots, and thereof she had her bane.

But some men say that this same she-wolf was the mother of King Siggeir, who had turned herself into this likeness by troll's lore and witchcraft.

CHAPTER VI. Of how Signy sent the Children of her and Siggeir to Sigmund.

Now whenas Sigmund is loosed and the stocks are broken, he dwells in the woods and holds himself there; but Signy sends yet again to wot of the tidings, whether Sigmund were alive or no; but when those who were sent came to him, he told them all as it had betid, and how things had gone betwixt him and the wolf; so they went home and tell Signy the tidings; but she goes and finds her brother, and they take counsel in such wise as to make a house underground in the wild-wood; and so things go on a while, Signy hiding him there, and sending him such things as he needed; but King Siggeir deemed that all the Volsungs were dead.

Now Siggeir had two sons by his wife, whereof it is told that when the eldest was ten winters old, Signy sends him to Sigmund, so that he might give him help, if he would in any wise strive to avenge his father; so the youngling goes to the wood, and comes late in evening-tide to Sigmund's earth-house; and Sigmund welcomed him in seemly fashion, and said that he should make ready their bread; "But I," said he, "will go seek firewood."

Therewith he gives the meal-bag into his hands while he himself went to fetch firing; but when he came back the youngling had done naught at the bread-making. Then asks Sigmund if the bread be ready—

Says the youngling, "I durst not set hand to the meal sack, because somewhat quick lay in the meal."

Now Sigmund deemed he wotted that the lad was of no such heart as that he would be fain to have him for his fellow; and when he met his sister, Sigmund said that he had come no nigher to the aid of a man though the youngling were with him.

Then said Signy, "Take him and kill him then; for why should such an one live longer?" and even so he did.

So this winter wears, and the next winter Signy sent her next son to Sigmund; and there is no need to make a long tale thereof, for in like wise went all things, and he slew the child by the counsel of Signy.

CHAPTER VII. Of the Birth of Sinfjotli the Son of Sigmund.

So on a tide it befell as Signy sat in her bower, that there came to her a witch-wife exceeding cunning, and Signy talked with her in such wise, "Fain am I," says she, "that we should change semblances together."

She says, "Even as thou wilt then."

And so by her wiles she brought it about that they changed semblances, and now the witch-wife sits in Signy's place accord-

ing to her rede, and goes to bed by the king that night, and he knows not that he has other than Signy beside him.

But the tale tells of Signy, that she fared to the earth-house of her brother, and prayed him give her harbouring for the night; "For I have gone astray abroad in the woods, and know not whither I am going."

So he said she might abide, and that he would not refuse harbour to one lone woman, deeming that she would scarce pay back his good cheer by tale-bearing: so she came into the house, and they sat down to meat, and his eyes were often on her, and a goodly and fair woman she seemed to him; but when they are full, then he says to her, that he is right fain that they should have but one bed that night; she nowise turned away therefrom, and so for three nights together he laid her in bed by him.

Thereafter she fared home, and found the witch-wife and bade her change semblances again, and she did so.

Now as time wears, Signy brings forth a man-child, who was named Sinfjotli, and when he grew up he was both big and strong, and fair of face, and much like unto the kin of the Volsungs, and he was hardly yet ten winters old when she sent him to Sigmund's earth-house; but this trial she had made of her other sons or ever she had sent them to Sigmund, that she had sewed gloves on to their hands through flesh and skin, and they had borne it ill and cried out thereat; and this she now did to Sinfjotli, and he changed countenance in nowise thereat. Then she flayed off the kirtle so that the skin came off with the sleeves, and said that this would be torment enough for him; but he said—

"Full little would Volsung have felt such a smart this."

So the lad came to Sigmund, and Sigmund bade him knead their meal up, while he goes to fetch firing; so he gave him the meal-sack, and then went after the wood, and by then he came back had Sinfjotli made an end of his baking. Then asked Sigmund if he had found nothing in the meal.

"I misdoubted me that there was something quick in the meal when I first fell to kneading of it, but I have kneaded it all up together, both the meal and that which was therein, whatsoever it was."

Then Sigmund laughed out, he said—

"Naught wilt thou eat of this bread to-night, for the most deadly of worms hast thou kneaded up therewith."

Now Sigmund was so mighty a man that he might eat venom and have no hurt therefrom; but Sinfjotli might abide whatso venom came on the outside of him, but might neither eat nor drink thereof.

CHAPTER VIII. The Death of King Siggeir and of Signy.

The tale tells that Sigmund thought Sinfjotli over young to help him to his revenge, and will first of all harden him with manly deeds; so in summer-tide they fare wide through the woods and slay men for their wealth; Sigmund deems him to take much after the kin of the Volsungs, though he thinks that he is Siggeir's son, and deems him to have the evil heart of his father, with the might and daring of the Volsungs; withal he must needs think him in no wise a kinsome man, for full oft would he bring Sigmund's wrongs to his memory, and prick him on to slay King Siggeir.

Now on a time as they fare abroad in the wood for the getting of wealth, they find a certain house, and two men with great gold rings asleep therein: now these twain were spell-bound skin-changers, and wolf-skins were hanging up over them in the house; and every tenth day might they come out of those skins; and they were kings' sons: so Sigmund and Sinfjotli do the wolf-skins on them, and then might they nowise come out of them, though forsooth the same nature went with them as heretofore; they howled as wolves howl, but both knew the meaning of that howling; they lay out in the wild-wood, and each went his way; and a word they made betwixt them, that they should risk the onset of seven men, but no more, and that he who was first to be set on should howl in wolfish wise: "Let us not depart from this," says Sigmund, "for thou art young and over-bold, and men will deem the quarry good, when they take thee."

Now each goes his way, and when they were parted, Sigmund meets certain men, and gives forth a wolf's howl; and when Sinfjotli heard it, he went straightway thereto, and slew them all, and once more they parted. But ere Sinfjotli has fared long through the woods, eleven men meet him, and he wrought in such wise that he slew them all, and was awearied therewith, and crawls under an oak, and there takes his rest. Then came Sigmund thither, and said—

"Why didst thou not call on me?"

Sinfjotli said, "I was loth to call for thy help for the slaying of eleven men."

Then Sigmund rushed at him so hard that he staggered and fell, and Sigmund bit him in the throat. Now that day they might not come out of their wolf-skins: but Sigmund lays the other on his back, and bears him home to the house, and cursed the wolf-gears and gave them to the trolls. Now on a day he saw where two weasels went, and how that one bit the other in the throat, and then ran straightway into the thicket, and took up a leaf and laid it on the wound, and thereon his fellow sprang up quite and clean whole; so Sigmund went out and saw a raven flying with a blade of that same herb to him; so he took it and drew it over Sinfjotli's hurt, and he straightway sprang up as whole as though he had never been hurt. Thereafter they went home to their earth-house, and abode there till the time came for them to put off the wolf-shapes; then they burnt them up with fire, and prayed that no more hurt might come to any one from them; but in that uncouth guise they wrought many famous deeds in the kingdom and lordship of King Siggeir.

Now when Sinfjotli was come to man's estate, Sigmund deemed he had tried him fully, and or ever a long time has gone by he turns his mind to the avenging of his father, if so it may be brought about; so on a certain day the twain get them gone from their earth-house, and come to the abode of King Siggeir late in the evening, and go into the porch before the hall, wherein were tuns of ale, and there they lie hid: now the queen is ware of them, where they are, and is fain to meet them; and when they met they took counsel, and were of one mind that Volsung should be revenged that same night.

Now Signy and the king had two children of tender age, who played with a golden toy on the floor, and bowled it along the pavement of the hall, running along with it; but therewith a golden ring from off it trundles away into the place where Sigmund and Sinfjotli lay, and off runs the little one to search for the same, and beholds withal where two men are sitting, big and grimly to look on, with overhanging helmets and bright white byrnie; so he runs up the hall to his father, and tells him of the sight he has seen, and thereat the king misdoubts of some guile abiding him; but Signy heard their speech, and arose and took both the children, and went out into the porch to them and said—

"Lo ye! These younglings have bewrayed you; come now therefore and slay them!"

Sigmund says, "Never will I slay thy children for telling of where I lay hid."

But Sinfjotli made little enow of it, but drew his sword and slew them both, and cast them into the hall at King Siggeir's feet.

Then up stood the king and cried on his men to take those who had lain privily in the porch through the night. So they ran thither and would lay hands on them, but they stood on their defence well and manly, and long he remembered it who was the nighest to them; but in the end they were borne down by many men and taken, and bonds were set upon them, and they were cast into fetters wherein they sit night long.

Then the king ponders what longest and worst of deaths he shall mete out to them; and when morning came he let make a great barrow of stones and turf; and when it was done, let set a great flat stone midmost inside thereof, so that one edge was aloft, the other allow; and so great it was that it went from wall to wall, so that none might pass it.

Now he bids folk take Sigmund and Sinfjotli and set them in the barrow, on either side of the stone, for the worse for them he deemed it, that they might hear each the other's speech, and yet that neither might pass one to the other. But now, while they were covering in the barrow with the turf-slips, thither came Signy,

bearing straw with her, and cast it down to Sinfjotli, and bade the thralls hide this thing from the king; they said yea thereto, and therewithal was the barrow closed in.

But when night fell, Sinfjotli said to Sigmund, "Belike we shall scarce need meat for a while, for here has the queen cast swine's flesh into the barrow, and wrapped it round about on the outer side with straw."

Therewith he handles the flesh and finds that therein was thrust Sigmund's sword; and he knew it by the hilts, as mirk as it might be in the barrow, and tells Sigmund thereof, and of that were they both fain enow.

Now Sinfjotli drave the point of the sword up into the big stone, and drew it hard along, and the sword bit on the stone. With that Sigmund caught the sword by the point, and in this wise they sawed the stone between them, and let not or all the sawing was done that need be done, even as the song sings:

Sinfjotli sawed
And Sigmund sawed,
Atwain with main
The stone was done.

Now are they both together loose in the barrow, and soon they cut both through stone and through iron, and bring themselves out thereof. Then they go home to the hall, whenas all men slept there, and bear wood to the hall, and lay fire therein; and withal the folk therein are waked by the smoke, and by the hall burning over their heads.

Then the king cries out, "Who kindled this fire, I burn withal?"

"Here am I," says Sigmund, "with Sinfjotli, my sister's son; and we are minded that thou shalt wot well that all the Volsungs are not yet dead."

Then he bade his sister come out, and take all good things at his hands, and great honour, and fair atonement in that wise, for all her griefs.

But she answered, "Take heed now, and consider, if I have kept King Siggeir in memory, and his slaying of Volsung the king! I let slay both my children, whom I deemed worthless for the revenging of our father, and I went into the wood to thee in a witch-wife's shape; and now behold, Sinfjotli is the son of thee and of me both! and therefore has he this so great hardihood and fierceness, in that he is the son both of Volsung's son and Volsung's daughter; and for this, and for naught else, have I so wrought, that Siggeir might get his bane at last; and all these things have I done that vengeance might fall on him, and that I too might not live long; and merrily now will I die with King Siggeir, though I was naught merry to wed him."

Therewith she kissed Sigmund her brother, and Sinfjotli, and went back again into the fire, and there she died with King Siggeir and all his good men.

But the two kinsmen gathered together folk and ships, and Sigmund went back to his father's land, and drave away thence the king, who had set himself down there in the room of king Volsung.

So Sigmund became a mighty King and far-famed, wise and high-minded: he had to wife one named Borghild, and two sons they had between them, one named Helgi and the other Hamund; and when Helgi was born, Norns came to him, and spake over him, and said that he should be in time to come the most renowned of all kings. Even therewith was Sigmund come home from the wars, and so therewith he gives him the name of Helgi, and these matters as tokens thereof, Land of Rings, Sun-litten Hill, and Sharp-shearing Sword, and withal prayed that he might grow of great fame, and like unto the kin of the Volsungs.

And so it was that he grew up high-minded, and well-beloved, and above all other men in all prowess; and the story tells that he went to the wars when he was fifteen winters old. Helgi was lord and ruler over the army, but Sinfjotli was gotten to be his fellow herein; and so the twain bare sway thereover.

CHAPTER IX. How Helgi, the son of Sigmund, won King Hodbrod and his Realm, and wedded Signy.

Now the tale tells that Helgi in his warring met a king hight Hundling, a mighty king, and lord of many men and many lands; they

fell to battle together, and Helgi went forth mightily, and such was the end of that fight that Helgi had the victory, but King Hunding fell and many of his men with him; but Helgi is deemed to have grown greatly in fame because he had slain so mighty a king.

Then the sons of Hunding draw together a great army to avenge their father. Hard was the fight betwixt them; but Helgi goes through the folk of those brothers unto their banner, and there slays these sons of Hunding, Alf and Eyolf, Herward and Hagbard, and wins there a great victory.

Now as Helgi fared from the fight, he met a many women right fair and worthy to look on, who rode in exceeding noble array; but one far excelled them all; then Helgi asked them the name of that their lady and queen, and she named herself Sigrun, and said she was daughter of King Hogni.

Then said Helgi, "Fare home with us: good welcome shall ye have!"

Then said the king's daughter, "Other work lies before us than to drink with thee."

"Yea, and what work, king's daughter?" said Helgi.

She answers, "King Hogni has promised me to Hodbrod, the son of King Granmar, but I have vowed a vow that I will have him to my husband no more than if he were a crow's son and not a king's; and yet will the thing come to pass, but and if thou standest in the way thereof, and goest against him with an army, and takest me away withal; for verily with no king would I rather bide on bolster than with thee."

"Be of good cheer, king's daughter," says he, "for certes he and I shall try the matter, or ever thou be given to him; yea, we shall behold which may prevail against the other; and hereto I pledge my life."

Thereafter, Helgi sent men with money in their hands to summon his folk to him, and all his power is called together to Red-Berg; and there Helgi abode till such time as a great company came to him from Hedinsey; and therewithal came mighty power from Norvi Sound aboard great and fair ships. Then King Helgi called to him the captain of his ships, who was hight Leif, and asked him if he had told over the tale of his army.

"A thing not easy to tell, lord," says he, "on the ships that came out of Norvi Sound are twelve thousand men, and otherwhere are half as many again."

Then bade King Helgi turn into the firth, called Varin's firth, and they did so: but now there fell on them so fierce a storm and so huge a sea, that the beat of the waves on board and bow was to hearken to like as the clashing together of high hills broken.

But Helgi bade men fear naught, nor take in any sail, but rather hoist every rag higher than heretofore; but little did they miss of foundering or ever they made land; then came Sigrun, daughter of King Hogni, down on to the beach with a great army, and turned them away thence to a good haven called Gnipalund; but the landsmen see what has befallen and come down to the seashore. The brother of King Hodbrod, lord of a land called Swarin's Cairn, cried out to them, and asked them who was captain over that mighty army. Then up stands Sinfjotli, with a helm on his head, bright shining as glass, and a byrny as white as snow; a spear in his hand, and thereon a banner of renown, and a gold-rimmed shield hanging before him; and well he knew with what words to speak to kings—

"Go thou and say, when thou hast made an end of feeding thy swine and thy dogs, and when thou beholdest thy wife again, that here are come the Volsungs, and in this company may King Helgi be found, if Hodbrod be fain of finding him, for his game and his joy it is to fight and win fame, while thou art kissing the hand-maids by the fire-side."

Then answered Granmar, "In nowise knowest thou how to speak seemly things, and to tell of matters remembered from of old, whereas thou layest lies on chiefs and lords; most like it is that thou must have long been nourished with wolf-meat abroad in the wild-woods, and has slain thy brethren; and a marvel it is to behold that thou darest to join thyself to the company of good men and true, thou, who hast sucked the blood of many a cold corpse."

Sinfjotli answered, "Dim belike is grown thy memory now, of how thou wert a witch-wife on Varinsey, and wouldst fain have a

man to thee, and chose me to that same office of all the world; and how thereafter thou wert a Valkyria in Asgarth, and it well-nigh came to this, that for thy sweet sake should all men fight; and nine wolf whelps I begat on thy body in Lowness, and was the father to them all."

Granmar answers, "Great skill of lying hast thou; yet belike the father of naught at all mayst thou be, since thou wert gelded by the giant's daughters of Thrasness; and lo thou art the stepson of King Siggeir, and were wont to lie abroad in wilds and woods with the kin of wolves; and unlucky was the hand wherewith thou slewest thy brethren, making for thyself an exceeding evil name."

Said Sinfjotli, "Mindest thou not then, when thou were stallion Grani's mare, and how I rode thee an amble on Bravoll, and that afterwards thou wert giant Golnir's goat-herd?"

Granmar says, "Rather would I feed fowls with the flesh of thee than wrangle any longer with thee."

Then spake King Helgi, "Better were it for ye, and a more manly deed, to fight, rather than to speak such things as it is a shame even to hearken to; Granmar's sons are no friends of me and of mine, yet are they hardy men none the less."

So Granmar rode away to meet King Hodbrod, at a stead called Sunfells, and the horses of the twain were named Sveipud and Sveggjud. The brothers met in the castle-porch, and Granmar told Hodbrod of the war-news. King Hodbrod was clad in a byrny, and had his helm on his head; he asked—

"What men are anigh, why look ye so wrathful?"

Granmar says, "Here are come the Volsungs, and twelve thousand men of them are afloat off the coast, and seven thousand are at the island called Sok, but at the stead called Grindur is the greatest company of all, and now I deem withal that Helgi and his fellowship have good will to give battle."

Then said the king, "Let us send a message through all our realm, and go against them, neither let any who is fain of fight sit idle at home; let us send word to the sons of Ring, and to King Hogni, and to Alf the Old, for they are mighty warriors."

So the hosts met at Wolfstone, and fierce fight befell there; Helgi rushed forth through the host of his foes, and many a man fell there; at last folk saw a great company of shield-maidens, like burning flames to look on, and there was come Sigrun, the king's daughter. Then King Helgi fell on King Hodbrod, and smote him, and slew him even under his very banner; and Sigrun cried out—

"Have thou thanks for thy so manly deed! now shall we share the land between us, and a day of great good hap this is to me, and for this deed shalt thou get honour and renown, in that thou hast felled to earth so mighty a king."

So Helgi took to him that realm and dwelt there long, when he had wedded Sigrun, and became a king of great honour and renown, though he has naught more to do with this story.

CHAPTER X. The ending of Sinfjotli, Sigmund's Son.

Now the Volsungs fare back home, and have gained great renown by these deeds. But Sinfjotli betook himself to warfare anew; and therewith he had sight of an exceeding fair woman, and yearned above all things for her; but that same woman was wooed also of the brother of Borghild, the king's wife: and this matter they fought out betwixt them, and Sinfjotli slew that king; and thereafter he harried far and wide, and had many a battle and even gained the day; and he became hereby honoured and renowned above all men; but in autumn tide he came home with many ships and abundant wealth.

Then he told his tidings to the king his father, and he again to the queen, and she for her part bids him get him gone from the realm, and made as if she would in nowise see him. But Sigmund said he would not drive him away, and offered her atonement of gold and great wealth for her brother's life, albeit he said he had never erst given weregild to any for the slaying of a man, but no fame it was to uphold wrong against a woman.

So seeing she might not get her own way herein, she said, "Have thy will in this matter, O my lord, for it is seemly so to be."

And now she holds the funeral feast for her brother by the aid and counsel of the king, and makes ready all things therefor or in the best of wise, and bade thither many great men.

At that feast, Borghild the queen bare the drink to folk, and she came over against Sinfjofli with a great horn, and said—

"Fall to now and drink, fair stepson!"

Then he took the horn to him, and looked therein, and said—

"Nay, for the drink is charmed drink"

Then said Sigmund, "Give it unto me then;" and therewith he took the horn and drank it off.

But the queen said to Sinfjotli, "Why must other men needs drink thine ale for thee?" And she came again the second time with the horn, and said, "Come now and drink!" and goaded him with many words.

And he took the horn, and said—

"Guile is in the drink."

And thereon, Sigmund cried out—

"Give it then unto me!"

Again, the third time, she came to him, and bade him drink off his drink, if he had the heart of a Volsung; then he laid hand on the horn, but said—

"Venom is therein."

"Nay, let the lip strain it out then, O son," quoth Sigmund; and by then was he exceeding drunk with drink, and therefore spake he in that wise.

So Sinfjotli drank, and straightway fell down dead to the ground.

Sigmund rose up, and sorrowed nigh to death over him; then he took the corpse in his arms and fared away to the wood, and went till he came to a certain firth; and there he saw a man in a little boat; and that man asked if he would be wafted by him over the firth, and he said yea thereto; but so little was the boat, that they might not all go in it at once, so the corpse was first laid therein, while Sigmund went by the firth-side. But therewith the boat and the man therein vanished away from before Sigmund's eyes.

So thereafter Sigmund turned back home, and drave away the queen, and a little after she died. But Sigmund the king yet ruled his realm, and is deemed ever the greatest champion and king of the old law.

CHAPTER XI. Of King Sigmund's last Battle, and of how he must yield up his Sword again.

There was a king called Eylimi, mighty and of great fame, and his daughter was called Hjordis, the fairest and wisest of womankind; and Sigmund hears it told of her that she was meet to be his wife, yea if none else were. So he goes to the house of King Eylimi, who would make a great feast for him, if so be he comes not thither in the guise of a foe. So messages were sent from one to the other that this present journey was a peaceful one, and not for war; so the feast was held in the best of wise and with many a man thereat; fairs were in every place established for King Sigmund, and all things else were done to the aid and comfort of his journey: so he came to the feast, and both kings hold their state in one hall; thither also was come King Lyngi, son of King Hunding, and he also is a-wooing the daughter of King Eylimi.

Now the king deemed he knew that the twain had come thither but for one errand, and thought withal that war and trouble might be looked for from the hands of him who brought not his end about; so he spake to his daughter, and said—

"Thou art a wise woman, and I have spoken it, that thou alone shalt choose a husband for thyself; choose therefore between these two kings, and my rede shall be even as thine."

"A hard and troublous matter," says she; "yet will I choose him who is of greatest fame, King Sigmund to wife, albeit he is well stricken in years."

So to him was she betrothed, and King Lyngi gat him gone. Then was Sigmund wedded to Hjordis, and now each day was the feast better and more glorious than on the day before it. But thereafter Sigmund went back home to Hunland, and King Eylimi, his father-in-law, with him, and King Sigmund betakes himself to the due ruling of his realm.

But King Lyngi and his brethren gather an army together to fall on Sigmund, for as in all matters they were wont to have the worsen lot, so did this bite the sorest of all; and they would fain prevail over the might and pride of the Volsungs. So they came to Hunland, and sent King Sigmund word how that they would not steal upon him, and that they deemed he would scarce slink away from them. So Sigmund said he would come and meet them in battle, and drew his power together; but Hjordis was borne into the wood with a certain bondmaid, and mighty wealth went with them; and there she abode the while they fought.

Now the vikings rushed from their ships in numbers not to be borne up against, but Sigmund the King, and Eylimi, set up their banners, and the horns blew up to battle; but King Sigmund let blow the horn his father erst had had, and cheered on his men to the fight, but his army was far the fewest.

Now was that battle fierce and fell, and though Sigmund were old, yet most hardly he fought, and was ever the foremost of his men; no shield or byrny might hold against him, and he went ever through the ranks of his foemen on that day, and no man might see how things would fare between them; many an arrow and many a spear was aloft in air that day, and so his spae-wrights wrought for him that he got no wound, and none can tell over the tale of those who fell before him, and both his arms were red with blood, even to the shoulders.

But now whenas the battle had dured a while, there came a man into the fight clad in a blue cloak, and with a slouched hat on his head, one-eyed he was, and bare a bill in his hand; and he came against Sigmund the King, and have up his bill against him, and as Sigmund smote fiercely with the sword it fell upon the bill and burst asunder in the midst: thenceforth the slaughter and dismay turned to his side, for the good-hap of King Sigmund had departed from him, and his men fell fast about him; naught did the king spare himself, but the rather cheered on his men; but even as the saw says, "No might 'gainst many", so was it now proven; and in this fight fell Sigmund the King, and King Eylimi, his father-in-law, in the fore-front of their battle, and therewith the more part of their folk.

CHAPTER XII. Of the Shards of the Sword Gram, and how Hjordis went to King Alf.

Now King Lyngi made for the king's abode, and was minded to take the king's daughter there, but failed herein, for there he found neither wife nor wealth: so he fared through all the realm, and gave his men rule thereafter, and now deemed that he had slain all the kin of the Volsungs, and that he need dread them no more from henceforth.

Now Hjordis went amidst the slain that night of the battle, and came whereas lay King Sigmund, and asked if he might be healed; but he answered—

"Many a man lives after hope has grown little; but my good-hap has departed from me, nor will I suffer myself to be healed, nor wills Odin that I should ever draw sword again, since this my sword and his is broken; lo now, I have waged war while it was his will."

"Naught ill would I deem matters," said she, "if thou mightest be healed and avenge my father."

The king said, "That is fated for another man; behold now, thou art great with a man-child; nourish him well and with good heed, and the child shall be the noblest and most famed of all our kin: and keep well withal the shards of the sword: thereof shall a goodly sword be made, and it shall be called Gram, and our son shall bear it, and shall work many a great work therewith, even such as eld shall never diminish; for his name shall abide and flourish as long as the world shall endure: and let this be enow for thee. But now I grow weary with my wounds, and I will go see our kin that have gone before me."

So Hjordis sat over him till he died at the day-dawning; and then she looked, and behold, there came many ships sailing to the land: then she spake to the handmaid—

"Let us now change raiment, and be thou called by my name, and say that thou art the king's daughter."

And thus they did; but now the vikings behold the great slaughter of men there, and see where two women fare away thence into the wood; and they deem that some great tidings must have befallen, and they leaped ashore from out their ships. Now the captain of these folks was Alf, son of Hjalprek, king of Denmark, who was sailing with his power along the land. So they came into the field among the slain, and saw how many men lay dead there; then the king bade go seek for the women and bring them thither, and they did so. He asked them what women they were; and, little as the thing seems like to be, the bondmaid answered for the twain, telling of the fall of King Sigmund and King Eylimi, and many another great man, and who they were withal who had wrought the deed. Then the king asks if they wotted where the wealth of the king was bestowed; and then says the bondmaid—

"It may well be deemed that we know full surely thereof."

And therewith she guides them to the place where the treasure lay: and there they found exceeding great wealth; so that men deem they have never seen so many things of price heaped up together in one place. All this they bore to the ships of King Alf, and Hjordis and the bondmaid went with them. Therewith these sail away to their own realm, and talk how that surely on that field had fallen the most renowned of kings.

So the king sits by the tiller, but the women abide in the fore-castle; but talk he had with the women and held their counsels of much account.

In such wise the king came home to his realm with great wealth, and he himself was a man exceeding goodly to look on. But when he had been but a little while at home, the queen, his mother, asked him why the fairest of the two women had the fewer rings and the less worthy attire.

"I deem," she said, "that she whom ye have held of least account is the noblest of the twain."

He answered: "I too have misdoubted me, that she is little like a bondwoman, and when we first met, in seemingly she greeted noble men. Lo now, we will make a trial of the thing."

So on a time as men sat at the drink, the king sat down to talk with the women, and said:—

"In what wise do ye note the wearing of the hours, whenas night grows old, if ye may not see the lights of heaven?"

Then says the bondwoman, "This sign have I, that whenas in my youth I was wont to drink much in the dawn, so now when I no longer use that manner, I am yet wont to wake up at that very same tide, and by that token do I know thereof."

Then the king laughed and said, "Ill manners for a king's daughter!" And therewith he turned to Hjordis, and asked her even the same question; but she answered—

"My father erst gave me a little gold ring of such nature, that it groweth cold on my finger in the day-dawning; and that is the sign that I have to know thereof."

The king answered: "Enow of gold there, where a very bondmaid bore it! But come now, thou hast been long enow hid from me; yet if thou hadst told me all from the beginning, I would have done to thee as though we had both been one king's children: but better than thy deeds will I deal with thee, for thou shalt be my wife, and due jointure will I pay thee whenas thou hast borne me a child."

She spake therewith and told out the whole truth about herself: so there was she held in great honour, and deemed the worthiest of women.

CHAPTER XIII. Of the Birth and Waxing of Sigurd Fafnir's-bane.

The tale tells that Hjordis brought forth a man-child, who was straightly borne before King Hjalprek, and then was the king glad thereof, when he saw the keen eyes in the head of him, and he said that few men would be equal to him or like unto him in any wise. So he was sprinkled with water, and had to name Sigurd, of whom all men speak with one speech and say that none was ever his like for growth and goodliness. He was brought up in the house of King Hjalprek in great love and honour; and so it is, that whenso all the noblest men and greatest kings are named in the olden tales, Sigurd is ever put before them all, for might

and prowess, for high mind and stout heart, wherewith he was far more abundantly gifted than any man of the northern parts of the wide world.

So Sigurd waxed in King Hjalprek's house, and there was no child but loved him; through him was Hjordis betrothed to King Alf, and jointure meted to her.

Now Sigurd's foster-father was hight Regin, the son of Hreidmar; he taught him all manner of arts, the chess play, and the lore of runes, and the talking of many tongues, even as the wont was with kings' sons in those days. But on a day when they were together, Regin asked Sigurd, if he knew how much wealth his father had owned, and who had the ward thereof; Sigurd answered, and said that the kings kept the ward thereof.

Said Regin, "Dost thou trust them all utterly?"

Sigurd said, "It is seemly that they keep it till I may do somewhat therewith, for better they wot how to guard it than I do."

Another time came Regin to talk to Sigurd, and said—

"A marvellous thing truly that thou must needs be a horse-boy to the kings, and go about like a running knave."

"Nay," said Sigurd, "it is not so, for in all things I have my will, and whatso thing I desire is granted me with good will."

"Well, then," said Regin, "ask for a horse of them."

"Yea," quoth Sigurd, "and that shall I have, whenso I have need thereof."

Thereafter Sigurd went to the king, and the king said—

"What wilt thou have of us?"

Then said Sigurd, "I would even a horse of thee for my disport."

Then said the king, "Choose for thyself a horse, and whatso thing else thou desirest among my matters."

So the next day went Sigurd to the wood, and met on the way an old man, long-bearded, that he knew not, who asked him whither away.

Sigurd said, "I am minded to choose me a horse; come thou, and counsel me thereon."

"Well then," said he, "go we and drive them to the river which is called Busil-tarn."

They did so, and drave the horses down into the deeps of the river, and all swam back to land but one horse; and that horse Sigurd chose for himself; grey he was of hue, and young of years, great of growth, and fair to look on, nor had any man yet crossed his back.

Then spake the grey-beard, "From Sleipnir's kin is this horse come, and he must be nourished heedfully, for it will be the best of all horses;" and therewithal he vanished away.

So Sigurd called the horse Grani, the best of all the horses of the world; nor was the man he met other than Odin himself.

Now yet again spake Regin to Sigurd, and said—

"Not enough is thy wealth, and I grieve right sore that thou must needs run here and there like a churl's son; but I can tell thee where there is much wealth for the winning, and great name and honour to be won in the getting of it."

Sigurd asked where that might be, and who had watch and ward over it.

Regin answered, "Fafnir is his name, and but a little way hence he lies, on the waste of Gnita-heath; and when thou comest there thou mayst well say that thou hast never seen more gold heaped together in one place, and that none might desire more treasure, though he were the most ancient and famed of all kings."

"Young am I," says Sigurd, "yet know I the fashion of this worm, and how that none durst go against him, so huge and evil is he."

Regin said, "Nay it is not so, the fashion and the growth of him is even as of other lingworms, and an over great tale men make of it; and even so would thy forefathers have deemed; but thou, though thou be of the kin of the Volsungs, shalt scarce have the heart and mind of those, who are told of as the first in all deeds of fame."

Sigurd said, "Yea, belike I have little of their hardihood and prowess, but thou hast naught to do, to lay a coward's name upon me, when I am scarce out of my childish years. Why dost thou egg me on hereto so busily?"

Regin said, "Therein lies a tale which I must needs tell thee."

"Let me hear the same," said Sigurd.

CHAPTER XIV. Regin's tale of his Brothers, and of the Gold called Andvari's Hoard.

"The tale begins," said Regin. "Hreidmar was my father's name, a mighty man and a wealthy; and his first son was named Fafnir, his second Otter, and I was the third, and the least of them all both for prowess and good conditions, but I was cunning to work in iron, and silver, and gold, whereof I could make matters that availed somewhat. Other skill my brother Otter followed, and had another nature withal, for he was a great fisher, and above other men herein; in that he had the likeness of an otter by day, and dwelt ever in the river, and bare fish to bank in his mouth, and his prey would he ever bring to our father, and that availed him much: for the most part he kept him in his otter-gear, and then he would come home, and eat alone, and slumbering, for on the dry land he might see naught. But Fafnir was by far the greatest and grimmest, and would have all things about called his.

"Now," says Regin, "there was a dwarf called Andvari, who ever abode in that force, which was called Andvari's force, in the likeness of a pike, and got meat for himself, for many fish there were in the force; now Otter, my brother, was ever wont to enter into the force, and bring fish aland, and lay them one by one on the bank. And so it befell that Odin, Loki, and Hoenir, as they went their ways, came to Andvari's force, and Otter had taken a salmon, and ate it slumbering upon the river bank; then Loki took a stone and cast it at Otter, so that he gat his death thereby; the gods were well content with their prey, and fell to flaying off the otter's skin; and in the evening they came to Hreidmar's house, and showed him what they had taken: thereon he laid hands on them, and doomed them to such ransom, as that they should fill the otter skin with gold, and cover it over without with red gold; so they sent Loki to gather gold together for them; he came to Ran, and got her net, and went therewith to Andvari's force, and cast the net before the pike, and the pike ran into the net and was taken. Then said Loki—

What fish of all fishes,
Swims strong in the flood,
But hath learnt little wit to beware?
Thine head must thou buy,
From abiding in hell,
And find me the wan waters flame.

He answered—

Andvari folk call me,
Call Oinn my father,
Over many a force have I fared;
For a Norn of ill-luck,
This life on me lay
Through wet ways ever to wade.

"So Loki beheld the gold of Andvari, and when he had given up the gold, he had but one ring left, and that also Loki took from him; then the dwarf went into a hollow of the rocks, and cried out, that that gold-ring, yea and all the gold withal, should be the bane of every man who should own it thereafter.

"Now the gods rode with the treasure to Hreidmar, and fulfilled the otter-skin, and set it on its feet, and they must cover it over utterly with gold: but when this was done then Hreidmar came forth, and beheld yet one of the muzzle hairs, and bade them cover that withal; then Odin drew the ring, Andvari's loom, from his hand, and covered up the hair therewith; then sang Loki—

Gold enow, gold enow,
A great weregild, thou hast,
That my head in good hap I may hold;
But thou and thy son
Are naught fated to thrive,
The bane shall it be of you both.

"Thereafter," says Regin, "Fafnir slew his father and murdered him, nor got I aught of the treasure, and so evil he grew, that he fell to lying abroad, and begrudged any share in the wealth to any man, and so became the worst of all worms, and ever now lies brooding upon that treasure: but for me, I went to the king and became his master-smith; and thus is the tale told of how I lost the heritage of my father, and the weregild for my brother."

So spake Regin; but since that time gold is called Ottergild, and for no other cause than this.

But Sigurd answered, "Much hast thou lost, and exceeding evil have thy kinsmen been! But now, make a sword by thy craft, such a sword as that none can be made like unto it; so that I may do great deeds therewith, if my heart avail thereto, and thou wouldst have me slay this mighty dragon."

Regin says, "Trust me well herein; and with that same sword shalt thou slay Fafnir."

CHAPTER XV. Of the Welding together of the Shards of the Sword Gram.

So Regin makes a sword, and gives it into Sigurd's hands. He took the sword, and said—

"Behold thy smithying, Regin!" and therewith smote it into the anvil, and the sword brake; so he cast down the brand, and bade him forge a better.

Then Regin forged another sword, and brought it to Sigurd, who looked thereon.

Then said Regin, "Belike thou art well content therewith, hard master though thou be in smithying."

So Sigurd proved the sword, and brake it even as the first; then he said to Regin—

"Ah, art thou, mayhap, a traitor and a liar like to those former kin of thine?"

Therewith he went to his mother, and she welcomed him in seemly wise, and they talked and drank together.

Then spake Sigurd, "Have I heard aright, that King Sigmund gave thee the good sword Gram in two pieces?"

"True enough," she said.

So Sigurd said, "Deliver them into my hands, for I would have them."

She said he looked like to win great fame, and gave him the sword. Therewith went Sigurd to Regin, and bade him make a good sword thereof as he best might; Regin grew wroth thereat, but went into the smithy with the pieces of the sword, thinking well meanwhile that Sigurd pushed his head far enow into the matter of smithying. So he made a sword, and as he bore it forth from the forge, it seemed to the smiths as though fire burned along the edges thereof. Now he bade Sigurd take the sword, and said he knew not how to make a sword if this one failed. Then Sigurd smote it into the anvil, and cleft it down to the stock thereof, and neither burst the sword nor brake it. Then he praised the sword much, and thereafter went to the river with a lock of wool, and threw it up against the stream, and it fell asunder when it met the sword. Then was Sigurd glad, and went home.

But Regin said, "Now whereas I have made the sword for thee, belike thou wilt hold to thy troth given, and wilt go meet Fafnir?"

"Surely will I hold thereto," said Sigurd, "yet first must I avenge my father."

Now Sigurd the older he grew, the more he grew in the love of all men, so that every child loved him well.

CHAPTER XVI. The prophecy of Grifir.

There was a man hight Grifir, who was Sigurd's mother's brother, and a little after the forging of the sword Sigurd went to Grifir, because he was a man who knew things to come, and what was fated to men: of him Sigurd asked diligently how his life should go; but Grifir was long or he spake, yet at the last, by reason of Sigurd's exceeding great prayers, he told him all his life and the fate thereof, even as afterwards came to pass. So when Grifir had told him all even as he would, he went back home; and a little after he and Regin met.

Then said Regin, "Go thou and slay Fafnir, even as thou hast given thy word."

Sigurd said, "That work shall be wrought; but another is first to be done, the avenging of Sigmund the king and the other of my kinsmen who fell in that their last fight."

CHAPTER XVII. Of Sigurd's Avenging of Sigmund his Father.

Now Sigurd went to the kings, and spake thus—

"Here have I abode a space with you, and I owe you thanks and reward, for great love and many gifts and all due honour; but now

will I away from the land and go meet the sons of Hunding, and do them to wit that the Volsungs are not all dead; and your might would I have to strengthen me therein."

So the kings said that they would give him all things soever that he desired, and therewith was a great army got ready, and all things wrought in the most heedful wise, ships and all war-gear, so that his journey might be of the stateliest: but Sigurd himself steered the dragon-keel which was the greatest and noblest; richly wrought were their sails, and glorious to look on.

So they sail and have wind at will; but when a few days were overpast, there arose a great storm on the sea, and the waves were to behold even as the foam of men's blood; but Sigurd bade take in no sail, howsoever they might be riven, but rather to lay on higher than heretofore. But as they sailed past the rocks of a ness, a certain man hailed the ships, and asked who was captain over that navy; then was it told him that the chief and lord was Sigurd, the son of Sigmund, the most famed of all the young men who now are.

Then said the man, "Naught but one thing, certes, do all say of him, that none among the sons of kings may be likened unto him; now fain were I that ye would shorten sail on some of the ships, and take me aboard."

Then they asked him of his name, and he sang—

Hnikar I hight,
When I gladdened Huginn,
And went to battle,
Bright son of Volsung;
Now may ye call
The carl on the cliff top,
Feng or Fjolnir:
Fain would I with you.

They made for land therewith, and took that man aboard.
Then quoth Sigurd, as the song says—

Tell me this, O Hnikar,
Since full well thou knowest
Fate of Gods, good and ill of mankind,
What best our hap foresheweth,
When amid the battle
About us sweeps the sword edge.

Quoth Hnikar—

Good are many tokens
If thereof men wotted
When the swords are sweeping;
Fair fellow deem I
The dark-winged raven,
In war, to weapon-wielder.

"The second good thing:
When abroad thou goest
For the long road well arrayed,
Good if thou seest
Two men standing,
Fain of fame within the forecourt.

"A third thing:
Good hearing,
The wolf a howling
Abroad under ash boughs;
Good hap shalt thou have
Dealing with helm-staves,
If thou seest these fare before thee.

"No man in fight
His face shall turn
Against the moon's sister
Low, late-shining,
For he winneth battle
Who best beholdeth
Through the midmost sword-play,
And the sloping ranks best shapeth.

"Great is the trouble
Of foot ill-tripping,
When arrayed for fight thou farest,
For on both sides about
Are the D'sir by thee,
Guileful, wishful of thy wounding.

"Fair-combed, well washen
Let each warrior be,
Nor lack meat in the morning,
For who can rule
The eve's returning,
And base to fall before fate grovelling.

Then the storm abated, and on they fared till they came aland in the realm of Hunding's sons, and then Fjolnir vanished away.

Then they let loose fire and sword, and slew men and burnt their abodes, and did waste all before them: a great company of folk fled before the face of them to Lyngi the King, and tell him that men of war are in the land, and are faring with such rage and fury that the like has never been heard of; and that the sons of King Hunding had no great forecast in that they said they would never fear the Volsungs more, for here was come Sigurd, the son of Sigmund, as captain over this army.

So King Lyngi let send the war-message all throughout his realm, and has no will to flee, but summons to him all such as would give him aid. So he came against Sigurd with a great army, he and his brothers with him, and an exceeding fierce fight befell; many a spear and many an arrow might men see there raised aloft, axes hard driven, shields cleft and byrnies torn, helmets were shivered, skulls split atwain, and many a man felled to the cold earth.

And now when the fight has long dured in such wise, Sigurd goes forth before the banners, and has the good sword Gram in his hand, and smites down both men and horses, and goes through the thickest of the throng with both arms red with blood to the shoulder; and folk shrank aback before him wheresoever he went, nor would either helm or byrny hold before him, and no man deemed he had ever seen his like. So a long while the battle lasted, and many a man was slain, and furious was the onset; till at last it befell, even as seldom comes to hand, when a land army falls on, that, do whatso they might, naught was brought about; but so many men fell of the sons of Hunding that the tale of them may not be told; and now whenas Sigurd was among the foremost, came the sons of Hunding against him, and Sigurd smote therewith at Lyngi the king, and clave him down, both helm and head, and mail-clad body, and thereafter he smote Hjorward his brother atwain, and then slew all the other sons of Hunding who were yet alive, and the more part of their folk withal.

Now home goes Sigurd with fair victory won, and plenteous wealth and great honour, which he had gotten to him in this journey, and feasts were made for him against he came back to the realm.

But when Sigurd had been at home but a little, came Regin to talk with him, and said—

"Belike thou wilt now have good will to bow down Fafnir's crest according to thy word plighted, since thou hast thus revenged thy father and the others of thy kin."

Sigurd answered, "That will we hold to, even as we have promised, nor did it ever fall from our memory."

CHAPTER XVIII. Of the Slaying of the Worm Fafnir.

Now Sigurd and Regin ride up the heath along that same way wherein Fafnir was wont to creep when he fared to the water; and folk say that thirty fathoms was the height of that cliff along which he lay when he drank of the water below. Then Sigurd spake:

"How sayedst thou, Regin, that this drake was no greater than other lingworms; methinks the track of him is marvellous great?"

Then said Regin, "Make thee a hole, and sit down therein, and whenas the worm comes to the water, smite him into the heart, and so do him to death, and win thee great fame thereby."

But Sigurd said, "What will betide me if I be before the blood of the worm?"

Says Regin, "Of what avail to counsel thee if thou art still afraid of everything? Little art thou like thy kin in stoutness of heart."

Then Sigurd rides right over the heath; but Regin gets him gone, sore afraid.

But Sigurd fell to digging him a pit, and whiles he was at that work, there came to him an old man with a long beard, and asked what he wrought there, and he told him.

Then answered the old man and said, "Thou doest after sorry counsel: rather dig thee many pits, and let the blood run therein; but sit thee down in one thereof, and so thrust the worm's heart through."

And therewithal he vanished away; but Sigurd made the pits even as it was shown to him.

Now crept the worm down to his place of watering, and the earth shook all about him, and he snorted forth venom on all the way before him as he went; but Sigurd neither trembled nor was adrad at the roaring of him. So whenas the worm crept over the pits, Sigurd thrust his sword under his left shoulder, so that it sank in up to the hilts; then up leapt Sigurd from the pit and drew the sword back again unto him, and therewith was his arm all bloody, up to the very shoulder.

Now when that mighty worm was ware that he had his death-wound, then he lashed out head and tail, so that all things soever that were before him were broken to pieces.

So whenas Fafnir had his death-wound, he asked "Who art thou? And who is thy father? And what thy kin, that thou wert so hardy as to bear weapons against me?"

Sigurd answered, "Unknown to men is my kin. I am called a noble beast: neither father have I nor mother, and all alone have I fared hither."

Said Fafnir, "Whereas thou hast neither father nor mother, of what wonder wert thou born then? But now, though thou tellest me not thy name on this my death-day, yet thou knowest verily that thou liest unto me."

He answered, "Sigurd am I called, and my father was Sigmund."

Says Fafnir, "Who egged thee on to this deed, and why wouldst thou be driven to it? Hadst thou never heard how that all folk were adrad of me, and of the awe of my countenance? But an eager father thou hadst, O bright eyed swain!"

Sigurd answered, "A hardy heart urged me on hereto; and a strong hand and this sharp sword, which well thou knowest now, stood me in stead in the doing of the deed; 'Seldom hath hardly eld a faint-heart youth."

Fafnir said, "Well, I wot that hadst thou waxed amid thy kin, thou mightest have good skill to slay folk in thine anger; but more of a marvel is it, that thou, a bondsman taken in war, shouldst have the heart to set on me, 'for few among bondsmen have heart for the fight."

Said Sigurd, "Wilt thou then cast it in my teeth that I am far away from my kin? Albeit I was a bondsman, yet was I never shackled. God wot thou hast found me free enow."

Fafnir answered, "In angry wise dost thou take my speech; but hearken, for that same gold which I have owned shall be thy bane too."

Quoth Sigurd, "Fain would we keep all our wealth til that day of days; yet shall each man die once for all."

Says Fafnir, "Few things wilt thou do after my counsel; but take heed that thou shalt be drowned if thou farest unwarily over the sea; so bide thou rather on the dry land, for the coming of the calm tide."

Then said Sigurd, "Speak, Fafnir, and say, if thou art so exceeding wise, who are the Norms who rule the lot of all mothers' sons."

Fafnir answers, "Many there be and wide apart; for some are of the kin of the Aesir, and some are of Elfin kin, and some there are who are daughters of Dvalin."

Said Sigurd, "How namest thou the holm whereon Surt and the Aesir mix and mingle the water of the sword?"

"Unshapen is that holm high," said Fafnir.

And yet again he said, "Regin, my brother, has brought about my end, and it gladdens my heart that thine too he bringeth about; for thus will things be according to his will."

And once again he spake, "A countenance of terror I bore up before all folk, after that I brooded over the heritage of my brother, and on every side did I spout out poison, so that none durst come anigh me, and of no weapon was I adrad, nor ever had I so many men before me, as that I deemed myself not stronger than all; for all men were sore afraid of me."

Sigurd answered and said, "Few may have victory by means of that same countenance of terror, for whoso comes amongst many shall one day find that no one man is by so far the mightiest of all."

Then says Fafnir, "Such counsel I give thee, that thou take thy horse and ride away at thy speediest, for oftentimes it falls out so, that he who gets a death-wound avenges himself none the less."

Sigurd answered, "Such as thy reds are I will nowise do after them; nay, I will ride now to thy lair and take to me that great treasure of thy kin."

"Ride there then," said Fafnir, "and thou shalt find gold enow to suffice thee for all thy life-days; yet shall that gold be thy bane, and the bane of every one soever who owns it."

Then up stood Sigurd, and said, "Home would I ride and lose all that wealth, if I deemed that by the losing thereof I should never die; but every brave and true man will fain have his hand on wealth till that last day; but thou, Fafnir, wallow in the death-pain till Death and Hell have thee."

And therewithal Fafnir died.

CHAPTER XIX. Of the Slaying of Regin, Son of Hreidmar.

Thereafter came Regin to Sigurd, and said, "Hail, lord and master, a noble victory hast thou won in the slaying of Fafnir, whereas none durst heretofore abide in the path of him; and now shall this deed of fame be of renown while the world stands fast."

Then stood Regin staring on the earth a long while, and presently thereafter spake from heavy mood: "Mine own brother hast thou slain, and scarce may I be called sackless of the deed."

Then Sigurd took his sword Gram and dried it on the earth, and spake to Regin—

"Afar thou farest when I wrought this deed and tried this sharp sword with the hand and the might of me; with all the might and main of a dragon must I strive, while thou wert laid alow in the heather-bush, wotting not if it were earth or heaven."

Said Regin, "Long might this worm have lain in his lair, if the sharp sword I forged with my hand had not been good at need to thee; had that not been, neither thou nor any man would have prevailed against him as at this time."

Sigurd answers, "Whenas men meet foes in fight, better is stout heart than sharp sword."

Then said Regin, exceeding heavily, "Thou hast slain my brother, and scarce may I be sackless of the deed."

Therewith Sigurd cut out the heart of the worm with the sword called Ridil; but Regin drank of Fafnir's blood, and spake, "Grant me a boon, and do a thing little for thee to do. Bear the heart to the fire, and roast it, and give me thereof to eat."

Then Sigurd went his ways and roasted it on a rod; and when the blood bubbled out he laid his finger thereon to essay it, if it were fully done; and then he set his finger in his mouth, and lo, when the heart-blood of the worm touched his tongue, straightway he knew the voice of all fowls, and heard withal how the wood-peckers chattered in the brake beside him—

"There sittest thou, Sigurd, roasting Fafnir's heart for another, that thou shouldest eat thine ownself, and then thou shouldest become the wisest of all men."

And another spake: "There lies Regin, minded to beguile the man who trusts in him."

But yet again said the third, "Let him smite the head from off him then, and be only lord of all that gold."

And once more the fourth spake and said, "Ah, the wiser were he if he followed after that good counsel, and rode thereafter to Fafnir's lair, and took to him that mighty treasure that lieth there, and then rode over Hindfell, whereas sleeps Brynhild; for there would he get great wisdom. Ah, wise he were, if he did after your reds, and bethought him of his own weal; 'for where wolf's ears are, wolf's teeth are near."

Then cried the fifth: "Yea, yea, not so wise is he as I deem him, if he spareth him, whose brother he hath slain already."

At last spake the sixth: "Handy and good rede to slay him, and be lord of the treasure!"

Then said Sigurd, "The time is unborn wherein Regin shall be my bane; nay, rather one road shall both these brothers fare."

And therewith he drew his sword Gram and struck off Regin's head.

Then heard Sigurd the wood-peckers a-singing, even as the song says.

For the first sang:

Bind thou, Sigurd,
The bright red rings!
Not meet it is
Many things to fear.
A fair may know I,
Fair of all the fairest
Girt about with gold,
Good for thy getting.

And the second:

Green go the ways
Toward the hall of Giuki
That the fates show forth
To those who fare thither;
There the rich king
Reareth a daughter;
Thou shalt deal, Sigurd,
With gold for thy sweetling.

And the third:

A high hall is there
Reared upon Hindfell,
Without all around it
Sweeps the red flame aloft.
Wise men wrought
That wonder of halls
With the unhidden gleam
Of the glory of gold.

Then the fourth sang:

Soft on the fell
A shield-may sleepeth
The lime-trees' red plague
Playing about her:
The sleep-thorn set Odin
Into that maiden
For her choosing in war
The one he willed not.

Go, son, behold
That may under helm
Whom from battle
Vinskornir bore,
From her may not turn
The torment of sleep.
Dear offspring of kings
In the dread Norns' despite.

Then Sigurd ate some deal of Fafnir's heart, and the remnant he kept. Then he leapt on his horse and rode along the trail of the worm Fafnir, and so right unto his abiding-place; and he found it open, and beheld all the doors and the gear of them that they were wrought of iron: yea, and all the beams of the house; and it was dug down deep into the earth: there found Sigurd gold exceeding plenteous, and the sword Rotti; and thence he took the Helm of Awe, and the Gold Byrny, and many things fair and good. So much gold he found there, that he thought verily that scarce might two horses, or three belike, bear it thence. So he took all the gold and laid it in two great chests, and set them on the horse Grani, and took the reins of him, but nowise will he stir, neither will he abide smiting. Then Sigurd knows the mind of the horse, and leaps on the back of him, and smites and spurs into him, and off the horse goes even as if he were unladen.

CHAPTER XX. Of Sigurd's Meeting with Brynhild on the Mountain.

By long roads rides Sigurd, till he comes at the last up on to Hindfell, and wends his way south to the land of the Franks; and he sees before him on the fell a great light, as of fire burning, and flaming up even unto the heavens; and when he came thereto, lo, a shield-hung castle before him, and a banner on the topmost thereof: into the castle went Sigurd, and saw one lying there asleep, and all-armed. Therewith he takes the helm from off the head of him, and sees that it is no man, but a woman; and she was clad in a byrny as closely set on her as though it had grown to her flesh; so he rent it from the collar downwards; and then the sleeves thereof, and ever the sword bit on it as if it were cloth. Then said Sigurd that over-long had she lain asleep; but she asked—

"What thing of great might is it that has prevailed to rend my byrny, and draw me from my sleep?"

Even as sings the song:

What bit on the byrny,
Why breaks my sleep away,
Who has turned from me
My wan tormenting?

"Ah, is it so, that here is come Sigurd Sigmundson, bearing Fafnir's helm on his head and Fafnir's bane in his hand?"

Then answered Sigurd—

Sigmund's son
With Sigurd's sword
E'en now rent down
The raven's wall.

"Of the Volsung's kin is he who has done the deed; but now I have heard that thou art daughter of a mighty king, and folk have told us that thou wert lovely and full of lore, and now I will try the same."

Then Brynhild sang—

Long have I slept
And slumbered long,
Many and long are the woes of mankind,
By the might of Odin
Must I bide helpless
To shake from off me the spells of slumber.

Hail to the day come back!
Hail, sons of the daylight!
Hail to thee, dark night, and thy daughter!
Look with kind eyes a-down,
On us sitting here lonely,
And give unto us the gain that we long for.

Hail to the Aesir,
And the sweet Asyniur!
Hail to the fair earth fulfilled of plenty!
Fair words, wise hearts,
Would we win from you,
And healing hands while life we hold.

Then Brynhild speaks again and says, "Two kings fought, one hight Helm Gunnar, an old man, and the greatest of warriors, and Odin had promised the victory unto him; but his foe was Agnar, or Audi's brother: and so I smote down Helm Gunnar in the fight; and Odin, in vengeance for that deed, stuck the sleep-thorn into me, and said that I should never again have the victory, but should be given away in marriage; but thereagainst I vowed a vow, that never would I wed one who knew the name of fear."

Then said Sigurd, "Teach us the lore of mighty matters!"

She said, "Belike thou cannest more skill in all than I; yet will I teach thee; yea, and with thanks, if there be aught of my cunning that will in anywise pleasure thee, either of runes or of other matters that are the root of things; but now let us drink together, and may the Gods give to us twain a good day, that thou mayst win good help and fame from my wisdom, and that thou mayst hereafter mind thee of that which we twain speak together."

Then Brynhild filled a beaker and bore it to Sigurd, and gave him the drink of love, and spake—

Beer bring I to thee,
Fair fruit of the byrnies' clash,
Mixed is it mightily,
Mingled with fame,
Brimming with bright lays
And pitiful runes,
Wise words, sweet words,
Speech of great game.

"Runes of war know thou,
If great thou wilt be!
Cut them on hilt of hardened sword,
Some on the brand's back,
Some on its shining side,
Twice name Tyr therein.

"Sea-runes good at need,
Learnt for ship's saving,
For the good health of the swimming horse;
On the stern cut them,
Cut them on the rudder-blade
And set flame to shaven oar:
Howso big be the sea-hills,
Howso blue beneath,
Hail from the main then comest thou home.

"Word-runes learn well
If thou wilt that no man
Pay back grief for the grief thou gavest;

Wind thou these,
Weave thou these,
Cast thou these all about thee,
At the Thing,
Where folk throng,
Unto the full doom faring.

"Of ale-runes know the wisdom
If thou wilt that another's wife
Should not bewray thine heart that trusteth:
Cut them on the mead-horn,
On the back of each hand,
And nick an N upon thy nail.

"Ale have thou heed
To sign from all harm
Leek lay thou in the liquor,
Then I know for sure
Never cometh to thee,
Mead with hurtful matters mingled.

"Help-runes shalt thou gather
If skill thou wouldst gain
To loosen child from low-laid mother;
Cut be they in hands hollow,
Wrapped the joints round about;
Call for the Good-folks' gainsome helping.

"Learn the bough-runes wisdom
If leech-lore thou lovest;
And wilt wot about wounds' searching
On the bark be they scored;
On the buds of trees
Whose boughs look eastward ever.

"Thought-runes shalt thou deal with
If thou wilt be of all men
Fairest-souled wight, and wisest,
These aredded
These first cut
These first took to heart high Hropt.

On the shield were they scored
That stands before the shining God,
On Early-waking's ear,
On All-knowing's hoof,
On the wheel which runneth
Under Rognir's chariot;
On Sleipnir's jaw-teeth,
On the sleigh's traces.

On the rough bear's paws,
And on Bragi's tongue,
On the wolf's claws,
And on eagle's bill,
On bloody wings,
And bridge's end;
On loosing palms,
And pity's path:

On glass, and on gold,
And on goodly silver,
In wine and in wort,
And the seat of the witch-wife;
On Gungnir's point,
And Grani's bosom;
On the Norn's nail,
And the neb of the night-owl.

"All these so cut,
Were shaven and sheared,
And mingled in with holy mead,
And sent upon wide ways enow;
Some abide with the Elves,
Some abide with the Aesir,
Or with the wise Vanir,
Some still hold the sons of mankind.

"These be the book-runes,
And the runes of good help,
And all the ale-runes,
And the runes of much might;
To whomso they may avail,
Unbewildered unspoil;
They are wholesome to have:
Thrive thou with these then.
When thou hast learnt their lore,
Till the Gods end thy life-days.

"Now shalt thou choose thee
E'en as choice is bidden,
Sharp steel's root and stem,
Choose song or silence;
See to each in thy heart,
All hurt has been heeded.

Then answered Sigurd—

Ne'er shall I flee,
Though thou wottest me fey;
Never was I born for blenching,
Thy loved rede will I
Hold aright in my heart
Even as long as I may live.

CHAPTER XXI. More Wise Words of Brynhild.

Sigurd spake now, "Sure no wiser woman than thou art one may be found in the wide world; yea, yea, teach me more yet of thy wisdom!"

She answers, "Seemly is it that I do according to thy will, and show thee forth more redes of great avail, for thy prayer's sake and thy wisdom;" and she spake withal—

"Be kindly to friend and kin, and reward not their trespasses against thee; bear and forbear, and win for thee thereby long enduring praise of men.

"Take good heed of evil things: a may's love, and a man's wife; full oft thereof doth ill befall!"

"Let not thy mind be overmuch crossed by unwise men at thronged meetings of folk; for oft these speak worse than they wot of; lest thou be called a dastard, and art minded to think that thou art even as is said; slay such an one on another day, and so reward his ugly talk.

"If thou farest by the way whereas bide evil things, be well ware of thyself; take not harbour near the highway, though thou be benighted, for oft abide there ill wights for men's bewilderment.

"Let not fair women beguile thee, such as thou mayst meet at the feast, so that the thought thereof stand thee in stead of sleep, and a quiet mind; yea, draw them not to thee with kisses or other sweet things of love.

"If thou hearest the fool's word of a drunken man, strive not with him being drunk with drink and witless; many a grief, yea, and the very death, groweth from out such things.

"Fight thy foes in the field, nor be burnt in thine house.

"Never swear thou wrongsome oath; great and grim is the reward for the breaking of plighted troth.

"Give kind heed to dead men,—sick-dead, Sea-dead; deal heedfully with their dead corpses.

"Trow never in him for whom thou hast slain father, brother, or whatso near kin, yea, though young he be; 'for oft waxes wolf in youngling'.

"Look thou with good heed to the wiles of thy friends; but little skill is given to me, that I should foresee the ways of thy life; yet good it were that hate fell not on thee from those of thy wife's house."

Sigurd spake, "None among the sons of men can be found wiser than thou; and thereby swear I, that thee will I have as my own, for near to my heart thou liest."

She answers, "Thee would I fainest choose, though I had all men's sons to choose from."

And thereto they plighted troth both of them.

CHAPTER XXII. Of the Semblance and Array of Sigurd Fafnir's-bane.

Now Sigurd rides away; many-folded is his shield, and blazing with red gold, and the image of a dragon is drawn thereon; and this same was dark brown above, and bright red below; and with even such-like image was adorned helm, and saddle, and coat-armour; and he was clad in the golden byrny, and all his weapons were gold wrought.

Now for this cause was the drake drawn on all his weapons, that when he was seen of men, all folk might know who went there; yea, all those who had heard of his slaying of that great dragon, that the Voerings call Fafnir; and for that cause are his weapons gold-wrought, and brown of hue, and that he was by far above other men in courtesy and goodly manners, and well-nigh in all things else; and whenas folk tell of all the mightiest champions, and the noblest chiefs, then ever is he named the foremost, and his name goes wide about on all tongues north of the sea of the Greek-lands, and even so shall it be while the world endures.

Now the hair of this Sigurd was golden-red of hue, fair of fashion, and falling down in great locks; thick and short was his beard, and of no other colour, high-nosed he was, broad and high-boned of face; so keen were his eyes, that few durst gaze up under the brows of him; his shoulders were as broad to look on as the shoulders of two; most duly was his body fashioned betwixt height and breadth, and in such wise as was seemliest; and this is the sign told of his height, that when he was girt with his sword Gram, which same was seven spans long, as he went through the full-grown rye-fields, the dew-shoe of the said sword smote the ears of the standing corn; and, for all that, greater was his strength than his growth: well could he wield sword, and cast forth spear, shoot shaft, and hold shield, bend bow, back horse, and do all the goodly deeds that he learned in his youth's days.

Wise he was to know things yet undone; and the voice of all fowls he knew, wherefore few things fell on him unawares.

Of many words he was, and so fair of speech withal, that whensoever he made it his business to speak, he never left speaking before that to all men it seemed full sure, that no otherwise must the matter be than as he said.

His sport and pleasure it was to give aid to his own folk, and to prove himself in mighty matters, to take wealth from his un-friends, and give the same to his friends.

Never did he lose heart, and of naught was he adrad.

CHAPTER XXIII. Sigurd comes to Hlymdale.

Forth Sigurd rides till he comes to a great and goodly dwelling, the lord whereof was a mighty chief called Heimir; he had to wife a sister of Brynhild, who was hight Bekkhild, because she had bidden at home, and learned handicraft, whereas Brynhild fared with helm and byrny unto the wars, wherefore was she called Brynhild.

Heimir and Bekkhild had a son called Alswid, the most courteous of men.

Now at this stead were men disporting them abroad, but when they see the man riding thereto, they leave their play to wonder at him, for none such had they ever seen erst; so they went to meet him, and gave him good welcome; Alswid bade him abide and have such things at his hands as he would; and he takes his bidding blithesomely; due service withal was established for him; four men bore the treasure of gold from off the horse, and the fifth took it to him to guard the same; therein were many things to behold, things of great price, and seldom seen; and great game and joy men had to look on byrnies and helms, and mighty rings, and wondrous great golden stoups, and all kinds of war weapons.

So there dwelt Sigurd long in great honour holden; and tidings of that deed of fame spread wide through all lands, of how he had slain that hideous and fearful dragon. So good joyance had they there together, and each was leal to other; and their sport was in the arraying of their weapons, and the shafting of their arrows, and the flying of their falcons.

CHAPTER XXIV. Sigurd sees Brynhild at Hlymdale.

In those days came home to Heimir, Brynhild, his foster-daughter, and she sat in her bower with her maidens, and could more skill in handicraft than other women; she sat, overlaying cloth with gold, and sewing therein the great deeds which Sigurd had wrought, the slaying of the Worm, and the taking of the wealth of him, and the death of Regin withal.

Now tells the tale, that on a day Sigurd rode into the wood with hawk, and hound, and men thronging; and whenas he came home his hawk flew up to a high tower, and sat him down on a certain window. Then fared Sigurd after his hawk, and he saw where sat a fair woman, and knew that it was Brynhild, and he deems all things he sees there to be worthy together, both her fairness, and the fair things she wrought: and therewith he goes into the hall, but has no more joyance in the games of the men folk.

Then spake Alswid, "Why art thou so bare of bliss? this manner of thine grieveth us thy friends; why then wilt thou not hold to thy gleesome ways? Lo, thy hawks pine now, and thy horse Grani droops; and long will it be ere we are booted thereof?"

Sigurd answered, "Good friend, hearken to what lies on my mind; for my hawk flew up into a certain tower; and when I came thereto and took him, lo there I saw a fair woman, and she sat by a needlework of gold, and did thereon my deeds that are passed, and my deeds that are to come."

Then said Alswid, "Thou has seen Brynhild, Budli's daughter, the greatest of great women."

"Yea, verily," said Sigurd; "but how came she hither?"

Alswid answered, "Short space there was betwixt the coming hither of the twain of you."

Says Sigurd, "Yea, but a few days ago I knew her for the best of the world's women."

Alswid said, "Give not all thine heed to one woman, being such a man as thou art; ill life to sit lamenting for what we may not have."

"I shall go meet her," says Sigurd, "and get from her love like my love, and give her a gold ring in token thereof."

Alswid answered, "None has ever yet been known whom she would let sit beside her, or to whom she would give drink; for ever will she hold to warfare and to the winning of all kinds of fame."

Sigurd said, "We know not for sure whether she will give us answer or not, or grant us a seat beside her."

So the next day after, Sigurd went to the bower, but Alswid stood outside the bower door, fitting shafts to his arrows.

Now Sigurd spake, "Abide, fair and hale lady,—how farest thou?"

She answered, "Well it fares; my kin and my friends live yet; but who shall say what goodhap folk may bear to their life's end?"

He sat him down by her, and there came in four damsels with great golden beakers, and the best of wine therein; and these stood before the twain.

Then said Brynhild, "This seat is for few, but and if my father come."

He answered, "Yet is it granted to one that likes me well."

Now that chamber was hung with the best and fairest of hangings, and the floor thereof was all covered with cloth.

Sigurd spake, "Now has it come to pass even as thou didst promise."

"O be thou welcome here!" said she, and arose therewith, and the four damsels with her, and bore the golden beaker to him, and bade him drink; he stretched out his hand to the beaker, and took it, and her hand withal, and drew her down beside him; and cast his arms round about her neck and kissed her, and said—

"Thou art the fairest that was ever born!"

But Brynhild said, "Ah, wiser is it not to cast faith and troth into a woman's power, for ever shall they break that they have promised."

He said, "That day would dawn the best of days over our heads whereon each of each should be made happy."

Brynhild answered, "It is not feared that we should abide together; I am a shield-may, and wear helm on head even as the kings of war, and them full oft I help, neither is the battle become loathsome to me."

Sigurd answered, "What fruit shall be of our life, if we live not together: harder to bear this pain that lies hereunder, than the stroke of sharp sword."

Brynhild answers, "I shall gaze on the hosts of the war-kings, but thou shalt wed Gudrun, the daughter of Giuki."

Sigurd answered, "What king's daughter lives to beguile me? neither am I double-hearted herein; and now I swear by the Gods that thee shall I have for mine own, or no woman else."

And even suchlike wise spake she.

Sigurd thanked her for her speech, and gave her a gold ring, and now they swore oath anew, and so he went his ways to his men, and is with them awhile in great bliss.

CHAPTER XXV. Of the Dream of Gudrun, Giuki's daughter.

There was a king hight Giuki, who ruled a realm south of the Rhine; three sons he had, thus named: Gunnar, Hogni, and Gutorm, and Gudrun was the name of his daughter, the fairest of maidens; and all these children were far before all other king's

children in all prowess, and in goodliness and growth withal; ever were his sons at the wars and wrought many a deed of fame. But Giuki had wedded Grimhild the Wise-wife.

Now Budli was the name of a king mightier than Giuki, mighty though they both were: and Atli was the brother of Brynhild: Atli was a fierce man and a grim, great and black to look on, yet noble of mien withal, and the greatest of warriors. Grimhild was a fierce-hearted woman.

Now the days of the Giukings bloomed fair, and chiefly because of those children, so far before the sons of men.

On a day Gudrun says to her may's that she may have no joy of heart; then a certain woman asked her wherefore her joy was departed.

She answered, "Grief came to me in my dreams, therefore is there sorrow in my heart, since thou must needs ask thereof."

"Tell it me, then, thy dream," said the woman, "for dreams oft forecast but the weather."

Gudrun answers, "Nay, nay, no weather is this; I dreamed that I had a fair hawk on my wrist, feathered with feathers of gold."

Says the woman, "Many have heard tell of thy beauty, thy wisdom, and thy courtesy; some king's son abides thee, then."

Gudrun answers, "I dreamed that naught was so dear to me as this hawk, and all my wealth had I cast aside rather than him."

The woman said, "Well, then, the man thou shalt have will be of the goodliest, and well shalt thou love him."

Gudrun answered, "It grieves me that I know not who he shall be; let us go seek Brynhild, for she belike will wot thereof."

So they arrayed them in gold and many a fair thing, and she went with her damsels till they came to the hall of Brynhild, and that hall was dight with gold, and stood on a high hill; and whenas their goings were seen, it was told Brynhild, that a company of women drove toward the burg in gilded waggons.

"That shall be Gudrun, Giuki's daughter," says she: "I dreamed of her last night; let us go meet her! No fairer woman may come to our house."

So they went abroad to meet them, and gave them good greeting, and they went into the goodly hall together; fairly painted it was within, and well adorned with silver vessel; cloths were spread under the feet of them, and all folk served them, and in many wise they sported.

But Gudrun was somewhat silent.

Then said Brynhild, "Ill to abash folk of their mirth; prithee do not so; let us talk together for our disport of mighty kings and their great deeds."

"Good talk," says Gudrun, "let us do even so; what kings deemest thou to have been the first of all men?"

Brynhild says, "The sons of Haki, and Hagbard withal; they brought to pass many a deed of fame in the warfare."

Gudrun answers, "Great men certes, and of noble fame! Yet Sigar took their one sister, and burned the other, house and all; and they may be called slow to revenge the deed; why didst thou not name my brethren, who are held to be the first of men as at this time?"

Brynhild says, "Men of good hope are they surely, though but little proven hitherto; but one I know far before them, Sigurd, the son of Sigmund the king; a youngling was he in the days when he slew the sons of Hunding, and revenged his father, and Eylimi, his mother's father."

Said Gudrun, "By what token tellest thou that?"

Brynhild answered, "His mother went amid the dead, and found Sigmund the king sore wounded, and would bind up his hurts; but he said he grew over old for war, and bade her lay this comfort to her heart, that she should bear the most famed of sons; and wise was the wise man's word therein: for after the death of King Sigmund, she went to King Alf, and there was Sigurd nourished in great honour, and day by day he wrought some deed of fame, and is the man most renowned of all the wide world."

Gudrun says, "From love hast thou gained these tidings of him; but for this cause came I here, to tell thee dreams of mine which have brought me great grief"

Says Brynhild, "Let not such matters sadden thee; abide with thy friends who wish thee blithesome, all of them!"

"This I dreamed," said Gudrun, "that we went, a many of us in company, from the bower, and we saw an exceeding great hart, that far excelled all other deer ever seen, and the hair of him was golden; and this deer we were all fain to take, but I alone got him; and he seemed to me better than all things else; but sithence thou, Brynhild, didst shoot and slay my deer even at my very knees, and such grief was that to me that scarce might I bear it; and then afterwards thou gavest me a wolf-cub, which besprinkled me with the blood of my brethren."

Brynhild answers, "I will arede thy dream, even as things shall come to pass hereafter; for Sigurd shall come to thee, even he whom I have chosen for my well-beloved; and Grimhild shall give him mead mingled with hurtful things, which shall cast us all into mighty strife. Him shalt thou have, and him shalt thou quickly miss; and Atli the king shalt thou wed; and thy brethren shalt thou lose, and slay Atli withal in the end."

Gudrun answers, "Grief and woe to know that such things shall be!"

And therewith she and hers get them gone home to King Giuki.

CHAPTER XXVI. Sigurd comes to the Giukings and is wedded to Gudrun.

Now Sigurd goes his ways with all that great treasure, and in friendly wise he departs from them; and on Grani he rides with all his war-gear and the burden withal; and thus he rides until he comes to the hall of King Giuki; there he rides into the burg, and that sees one of the king's men, and he spake withal—

"Sure it may be deemed that here is come one of the Gods, for his array is all done with gold, and his horse is far mightier than other horses, and the manner of his weapons is most exceeding goodly, and most of all the man himself far excels all other men ever seen."

So the king goes out with his court and greets the man, and asks—

"Who art thou who thus ridest into my burg, as none has durst hitherto without the leave of my sons?"

He answered, "I am called Sigurd, son of King Sigmund."

Then said King Giuki, "Be thou welcome here then, and take at our hands whatso thou wilt."

So he went into the king's hall, and all men seemed little beside him, and all men served him, and there he abode in great joyance.

Now oft they all ride abroad together, Sigurd and Gunnar and Hogni, and ever is Sigurd far the foremost of them, mighty men of their hands though they were.

But Grimhild finds how heartily Sigurd loved Brynhild, and how oft he talks of her; and she falls to thinking how well it were, if he might abide there and wed the daughter of King Giuki, for she saw that none might come anigh to his goodliness, and what faith and goodhelp there was in him, and how that he had more wealth withal than folk might tell of any man; and the king did to him even as unto his own sons, and they for their parts held him of more worth than themselves.

So on a night as they sat at the drink, the queen arose, and went before Sigurd, and said—

"Great joy we have in thine abiding here, and all good things will we put before thee to take of us; lo now, take this horn and drink thereof."

So he took it and drank, and therewithal she said, "Thy father shall be Giuki the king, and I shall be thy mother, and Gunnar and Hogni shall be thy brethren, and all this shall be sworn with oaths each to each; and then surely shall the like of you never be found on earth."

Sigurd took her speech well, for with the drinking of that drink all memory of Brynhild departed from him. So there he abode awhile.

And on a day went Grimhild to Giuki the king, and cast her arms about his neck, and spake—

"Behold, there has now come to us the greatest of great hearts that the world holds; and needs must he be trusty and of great avail; give him thy daughter then, with plenteous wealth, and as much of rule as he will; perchance thereby he will be well content to abide here ever."

The king answered, "Seldom does it befall that kings offer their daughters to any; yet in higher wise will it be done to offer her to this man, than to take lowly prayers for her from others."

On a night Gudrun pours out the drink, and Sigurd beholds her how fair she is and how full of all courtesy.

Five seasons Sigurd abode there, and ever they passed their days together in good honour and friendship.

And so it befell that the kings held talk together, and Giuki said —

"Great good thou givest us, Sigurd, and with exceeding strength thou strengthenest our realm."

Then Gunnar said, "All things that may be will we do for thee, so thou abide here long; both dominion shalt thou have, and our sister freely and unprayed for, whom another man would not get for all his prayers."

Sigurd says, "Thanks have ye for this wherewith ye honour me, and gladly will I take the same."

Therewith they swore brotherhood together, and to be even as if they were children of one father and one mother; and a noble feast was holden, and endured many days, and Sigurd drank at the wedding of him and Gudrun; and there might men behold all manner of game and glee, and each day the feast better and better.

Now fare these folk wide over the world, and do many great deeds, and slay many kings' sons, and no man has ever done such works of prowess as did they; then home they come again with much wealth won in war.

Sigurd gave of the serpent's heart to Gudrun, and she ate thereof, and became greater-hearted, and wiser than ere before: and the son of these twain was called Sigmund.

Now on a time went Grimhild to Gunnar her son, and spake—

"Fair blooms the life and fortune of thee, but for one thing only, and namely whereas thou art unwedded; go woo Brynhild; good rede is this, and Sigurd will ride with thee."

Gunnar answered, "Fair is she certes, and I am fain enow to win her;" and therewith he tells his father, and his brethren, and Sigurd, and they all prick him on to that wooing.

CHAPTER XXVII. The Wooing of Brynhild.

Now they array them joyously for their journey, and ride over hill and dale to the house of King Budli, and woo his daughter of him; in a good wise he took their speech, if so be that she herself would not deny them; but he said withal that so high-minded was she, that that man only might wed her whom she would.

Then they ride to Hlymdale, and there Heimir gave them good welcome; so Gunnar tells his errand; Heimir says, that she must needs wed but him whom she herself chose freely; and tells them how her abode was but a little way thence, and that he deemed that him only would she have who should ride through the flaming fire that was drawn round about her hall; so they depart and come to the hall and the fire, and see there a castle with a golden roof-ridge, and all round about a fire roaring up.

Now Gunnar rode on Goti, but Hogni on Holkvi, and Gunnar smote his horse to face the fire, but he shrank aback.

Then said Sigurd, "Why givest thou back, Gunnar?"

He answered, "The horse will not tread this fire; but lend me thy horse Grani."

"Yea, with all my good will," says Sigurd.

Then Gunnar rides him at the fire, and yet nowise will Gram stir, nor may Gunnar any the more ride through that fire. So now they change semblance, Gunnar and Sigurd, even as Grimhild had taught them; then Sigurd in the likeness of Gunnar mounts and rides, Gram in his hand, and golden spurs on his heels; then leapt Grani into the fire when he felt the spurs; and a mighty roar arose as the fire burned ever madder, and the earth trembled, and the flames went up even unto the heavens, nor had any dared to ride as he rode, even as it were through the deep mirk.

But now the fire sank withal, and he leapt from his horse and went into the hall, even as the song says—

The flame flared at its maddest,
Earth's fields fell a-quaking
As the red flame aloft
Licked the lowest of heaven.
Few had been fain,

Of the rulers of folk,
To ride through that flame,
Or athwart it to tread.

Then Sigurd smote
Grani with sword,
And the flame was slaked
Before the king;
Low lay the flames
Before the fain of fame;
Bright gleamed the array
That Regin erst owned.

Now when Sigurd had passed through the fire, he came into a certain fair dwelling, and therein sat Brynhild.

She asked, "What man is it?"

Then he named himself Gunnar, son of Giuki, and said—"Thou art awarded to me as my wife, by the good will and word of thy father and thy foster-father, and I have ridden through the flames of thy fire, according to thy word that thou hast set forth."

"I wot not clearly," said she, "how I shall answer thee."

Now Sigurd stood upright on the hall floor, and leaned on the hilt of his sword, and he spake to Brynhild—

"In reward thereof, shall I pay thee a great dower in gold and goodly things?"

She answered in heavy mood from her seat, whereas she sat like unto swan on billow, having a sword in her hand, and a helm on her head, and being clad in a byrny, "O Gunnar," she says, "speak not to me of such things, unless thou be the first and best of all men; for then shalt thou slay those my wooers, if thou hast heart thereto; I have been in battles with the king of the Greeks, and our weapons were stained with red blood, and for such things still I yearn."

He answered, "Yea, certes many great deeds hast thou done; but yet call thou to mind thine oath, concerning the riding through of this fire, wherein thou didst swear that thou wouldst go with the man who should do this deed."

So she found that he spoke but the sooth, and she paid heed to his words, and arose, and greeted him meetly, and he abode there three nights, and they lay in one bed together; but he took the sword Gram and laid it betwixt them: then she asked him why he laid it there; and he answered, that in that wise must he needs wed his wife or else get his bane.

Then she took from off her the ring Andvari's-loom, which he had given her aforetime, and gave it to him, but he gave her another ring out of Fafnir's hoard.

Thereafter he rode away through the same fire unto his fellows, and he and Gunnar changed semblances again, and rode unto Hlymdale, and told how it had gone with them.

That same day went Brynhild home to her foster-father, and tells him as one whom she trusted, how that there had come a king to her; "And he rode through my flaming fire, and said he was come to woo me, and named himself Gunnar; but I said that such a deed might Sigurd alone have done, with whom I plighted troth on the mountain; and he is my first troth-plight, and my well-beloved."

Heimir said that things must needs abide even as now they had now come to pass.

Brynhild said, "Aslaug the daughter of me and Sigurd shall be nourished here with thee."

Now the kings fare home, but Brynhild goes to her father; Grimhild welcomes the kings meetly, and thanks Sigurd for his fellowship; and withal is a great feast made, and many were the guests thereat; and thither came Budli the King with his daughter Brynhild, and his son Atli, and for many days did the feast endure: and at that feast was Gunnar wedded to Brynhild: but when it was brought to an end, once more has Sigurd memory of all the oaths that he sware unto Brynhild, yet withal he let all things abide in rest and peace.

Brynhild and Gunnar sat together in great game and glee, and drank goodly wine.

CHAPTER XXVIII. How the Queens held angry converse together at the Bathing.

On a day as the Queens went to the river to bathe them, Brynhild waded the farthest out into the river; then asked Gudrun what that deed might signify.

Brynhild said, "Yea, and why then should I be equal to thee in this matter more than in others? I am minded to think that my father is mightier than thine, and my true love has wrought many wondrous works of fame, and hath ridden the flaming fire withal, while thy husband was but the thrall of King Hjalprek."

Gudrun answered full of wrath, "Thou wouldst be wise if thou shouldst hold thy peace rather than revile my husband: lo now, the talk of all men it is, that none has ever abode in this world like unto him in all matters soever; and little it beseems thee of all folk to mock him who was thy first beloved: and Fafnir he slew, yea, and he rode thy flaming fire, whereas thou didst deem that he was Gunnar the King, and by thy side he lay, and took from thine hand the ring Andvari's-loom;—here mayst thou well behold it!"

Then Brynhild saw the ring and knew it, and waxed as wan as a dead woman, and she went home and spake no word the evening long.

So when Sigurd came to bed to Gudrun she asked him why Brynhild's joy was so departed.

He answered, "I know not, but sore I misdoubt me that soon we shall know thereof overwell."

Gudrun said, "Why may she not love her life, having wealth and bliss, and the praise of all men, and the man withal that she would have?"

"Ah, yea!" said Sigurd, "and where in all the world was she then, when she said that she deemed she had the noblest of all men, and the dearest to her heart of all?"

Gudrun answers, "Tomorn will I ask her concerning this, who is the liefest to her of all men for a husband."

Sigurd said, "Needs must I forbid thee this, and full surely wilt thou rue the deed if thou doest it."

Now the next morning they sat in the bower, and Brynhild was silent; then spake Gudrun—

"Be merry, Brynhild! Griefest thou because of that speech of ours together, or what other thing slayeth thy bliss?"

Brynhild answers, "With naught but evil intent thou sayest this, for a cruel heart thou hast."

"Say not so," said Gudrun; "but rather tell me all the tale."

Brynhild answers, "Ask such things only as are good for thee to know—matters meet for mighty dames. Good to love good things when all goes according to thy heart's desire!"

Gudrun says, "Early days for me to glory in that; but this word of thine looketh toward some foreseeing. What ill dost thou thrust at us? I did naught to grieve thee."

Brynhild answers, "For this shalt thou pay, in that thou hast got Sigurd to thee,—nowise can I see thee living in the bliss thereof, whereas thou hast him, and the wealth and the might of him."

But Gudrun answered, "Naught knew I of your words and vows together; and well might my father look to the mating of me with-out dealing with thee first."

"No secret speech had we," quoth Brynhild, "though we swore oath together; and full well didst thou know that thou wentest about to beguile me; verily thou shalt have thy reward!"

Says Gudrun, "Thou art mated better than thou are worthy of; but thy pride and rage shall be hard to slake belike, and therefore shall many a man pay."

"Ah, I should be well content," said Brynhild, "if thou hadst not the nobler man!"

Gudrun answers, "So noble a husband hast thou, that who knows of a greater king or a lord of more wealth and might?"

Says Brynhild, "Sigurd slew Fafnir, and that only deed is of more worth than all the might of King Gunnar."

(Even as the song says):

The worm Sigurd slew,
Nor e'er shall that deed
Be worsened by age
While the world is alive:
But thy brother the King
Never durst, never bore

The flame to ride down
Through the fire to fare.

Gudrun answers, "Grani would not abide the fire under Gunnar the King, but Sigurd durst the deed, and thy heart may well abide without mocking him."

Brynhild answers, "Nowise will I hide from thee that I deem no good of Grimhild."

Says Gudrun, "Nay, lay no ill words on her, for in all things she is to thee as to her own daughter."

"Ah," says Brynhild, "she is the beginning of all this hale that biteth so; an evil drink she bare to Sigurd, so that he had no more memory of my very name."

"All wrong thou talkest; a lie without measure is this," quoth Gudrun.

Brynhild answered, "Have thou joy of Sigurd according to the measure of the wiles wherewith ye have beguiled me! Unworthily have ye conspired against me; may all things go with you as my heart hopes!"

Gudrun says, "More joy shall I have of him than thy wish would give unto me: but to no man's mind it came, that he had aforetime his pleasure of me; nay not once."

"Evil speech thou speakest," says Brynhild; "when thy wrath runs off thou wilt rue it; but come now, let us no more cast angry words one at the other!"

Says Gudrun, "Thou wert the first to cast such words at me, and now thou makest as if thou wouldst amend it, but a cruel and hard heart abides behind."

"Let us lay aside vain babble," says Brynhild. "Long did I hold my peace concerning my sorrow of heart, and, lo now, thy brother alone do I love; let us fall to other talk."

Gudrun said, "Far beyond all this doth thine heart look."

And so ugly ill befell from that going to the river, and that knowing of the ring, wherefrom did all their talk arise.

CHAPTER XXIX. Of Brynhild's great Grief and Mourning.

After this talk Brynhild lay a-bed, and tidings were brought to King Gunnar that Brynhild was sick; he goes to see her thereon, and asks what ails her; but she answered him naught, but lay there as one dead: and when he was hard on her for an answer, she said—

"What didst thou with that ring that I gave thee, even the one which King Budli gave me at our last parting, when thou and King Giuki came to him and threatened fire and the sword, unless ye had me to wife? Yea, at that time he led me apart, and asked me which I had chosen of those who were come; but I prayed him that I might abide to ward the land and be chief over the third part of his men; then were there two choices for me to deal betwixt, either that I should be wedded to him whom he would, or lose all my weal and friendship at his hands; and he said withal that his friendship would be better to me than his wrath: then I bethought me whether I should yield to his will, or slay many a man; and therewithal I deemed that it would avail little to strive with him, and so it fell out, that I promised to wed whomsoever should ride the horse Grani with Fafnir's Hoard, and ride through my flaming fire, and slay those men whom I called on him to slay, and now so it was, that none durst ride, save Sigurd only, because he lacked no heart thereto; yea, and the Worm he slew, and Regin, and five kings beside; but thou, Gunnar, durst do naught; as pale as a dead man didst thou wax, and no king thou art, and no champion; so whereas I made a vow unto my father, that him alone would I love who was the noblest man alive, and that this is none save Sigurd, lo, now have I broken my oath and brought it to naught, since he is none of mine, and for this cause shall I compass thy death; and a great reward of evil things have I wherewith to reward Grimhild;—never, I wot, has woman lived eviler or of lesser heart than she."

Gunnar answered in such wise that few might hear him, "Many a vile word hast thou spoken, and an evil-hearted woman art thou, whereas thou revilest a woman far better than thou; never would she curse her life as thou dost; nay, nor has she tormented dead folk, or murdered any; but lives her life well praised of all."

Brynhild answered, "Never have I dwelt with evil things privily, or done loathsome deeds;—yet most fain I am to slay thee."

And therewith would she slay King Gunnar, but Hogni laid her in fetters; but then Gunnar spake withal—

"Nay, I will not that she abide in fetters."

Then said she, "Heed it not! For never again seest thou me glad in thine hall, never drinking, never at the chess-play, never speaking the words of kindness, never over-laying the fair cloths with gold, never giving thee good counsel;—ah, my sorrow of heart that I might not get Sigurd to me!"

Then she sat up and smote her needlework, and rent it asunder, and bade set open her bower doors, that far away might the wailings of her sorrow be heard; then great mourning and lamentation there was, so that folk heard it far and wide through that abode.

Now Gudrun asked her bower-maidens why they sat so joyless and downcast. "What has come to you, that ye fare ye as witless women, or what unheard-of wonders have befallen you?"

Then answered a waiting lady, high Swafloð, "An untimely, an evil day it is, and our hall is fulfilled of lamentation."

Then spake Gudrun to one of her handmaids, "Arise, for we have slept long; go, wake Brynhild, and let us fall to our needlework and be merry."

"Nay, nay," she says, "nowise may I wake her, or talk with her; for many days has she drunk neither mead nor wine; surely the wrath of the Gods has fallen upon her."

Then spake Gudrun to Gunnar, "Go and see her," she says, "and bid her know that I am grieved with her grief."

"Nay," says Gunnar, "I am forbid to go see her or to share her weal."

Nevertheless he went unto her, and strives in many wise to have speech of her, but gets no answer whatsoever; therefore he gets him gone and finds Hogni, and bids him go see her: he said he was loth thereto, but went, and gat no more of her.

Then they go and find Sigurd, and pray him to visit her; he answered naught thereto, and so matters abode for that night.

But the next day, when he came home from hunting, Sigurd went to Gudrun, and spake—

"In such wise do matters show to me, as though great and evil things will betide from this trouble and upheaving; and that Brynhild will surely die."

Gudrun answers, "O my lord, by great wonders is she encompassed, seven days and seven nights has she slept, and none has dared wake her."

"Nay, she sleeps not," said Sigurd, "her heart is dealing rather with dreadful intent against me."

Then said Gudrun, weeping, "Woe worth the while for thy death! Go and see her; and wot if her fury may not be abated; give her gold, and smother up her grief and anger therewith!"

Then Sigurd went out, and found the door of Brynhild's chamber open; he deemed she slept, and drew the clothes from off her, and said—

"Awake, Brynhild! The sun shineth now over all the house, and thou hast slept enough; cast off grief from thee, and take up gladness!"

She said, "And how then hast thou dared to come to me? in this treason none was worse to me than thou."

Said Sigurd, "Why wilt thou not speak to folk? for what cause sorrowest thou?"

Brynhild answers, "Ah, to thee will I tell of my wrath!"

Sigurd said, "As one under a spell art thou, if thou deemest that there is aught cruel in my heart against thee; but thou hast him for husband whom thou didst choose."

"Ah, nay," she said, "never did Gunnar ride through the fire to me, nor did he give me to dower the host of the slain: I wondered at the man who came into my hall; for I deemed indeed that I knew thine eyes; but I might not see clearly, or divide the good from the evil, because of the veil that lay heavy on my fortune."

Says Sigurd, "No nobler men are there than the sons of Giuki, they slew the king of the Danes, and that great chief, the brother of King Budli."

Brynhild answered, "Surely for many an ill-deed must I reward them; mind me not of my griefs against them! But thou, Sigurd,

slewest the Worm, and rodest the fire through; yea, and for my sake, and not one of the sons of King Giuki."

Sigurd answers, "I am not thy husband, and thou art not my wife; yet did a farfamed king pay dower to thee."

Says Brynhild, "Never looked I at Gunnar in such a wise that my heart smiled on him; and hard and fell am I to him, though I hide it from others."

"A marvellous thing," says Sigurd, "not to love such a king; what angers thee most? for surely his love should be better to thee than gold."

"This is the sorest sorrow to me," she said, "that the bitter sword is not reddened in thy blood."

"Have no fear thereof!" says he, "no long while to wait or the bitter sword stand deep in my heart; and no worse needest thou to pray for thyself, for thou wilt not live when I am dead; the days of our two lives shall be few enough from henceforth."

Brynhild answers, "Enough and to spare of bale is in thy speech, since thou bewrayedst me, and didst twin me and all bliss;—naught do I heed my life or death."

Sigurd answers, "Ah, live, and love King Gunnar and me withal! and all my wealth will I give thee if thou die not."

Brynhild answers, "Thou knowest me not, nor the heart that is in me; for thou art the first and best of all men, and I am become the most loathsome of all women to thee."

"This is truer," says Sigurd, "that I loved thee better than myself, though I fell into the wiles from whence our lives may not escape; for whenso my own heart and mind availed me, then I sorrowed sore that thou wert not my wife; but as I might I put my trouble from me, for in a king's dwelling was I; and withal and in spite of all I was well content that we were all together. Well may it be, that that shall come to pass which is foretold; neither shall I fear the fulfilment thereof."

Brynhild answered, and said, "Too late thou tellest me that my grief grieved thee: little pity shall I find now."

Sigurd said, "This my heart would, that thou and I should go into one bed together; even so wouldst thou be my wife."

Said Brynhild, "Such words may nowise be spoken, nor will I have two kings in one hall; I will lay my life down rather than beguile Gunnar the King."

And therewith she call to mind how they met, they two, on the mountain, and swore oath each to each.

"But now is all changed, and I will not live."

"I might not call to mind thy name," said Sigurd, "or know thee again, before the time of thy wedding; the greatest of all griefs is that."

Then said Brynhild, "I swore an oath to wed the man who should ride my flaming fire, and that oath will I hold to, or die."

"Rather than thou die, I will wed thee, and put away Gudrun," said Sigurd.

But therewithal so swelled the heart betwixt the sides of him, that the rings of his byrny burst asunder.

"I will not have thee," says Brynhild, "nay, nor any other!"

Then Sigurd got him gone.

So saith the song of Sigurd—

Out then went Sigurd,
The great kings' well-loved,
From the speech and the sorrow,
Sore drooping, so grieving,
That the shirt round about him
Of iron rings woven,
From the sides brake asunder
Of the brave in the battle.

So when Sigurd came into the hall, Gunnar asked if he had come to a knowledge of what great grief lay heavy on her, or if she had power of speech: and Sigurd said that she lacked it not. So now Gunnar goes to her again, and asked her, what wrought her woe, or if there were anything that might amend it.

"I will not live," says Brynhild, "for Sigurd has bewrayed me, yea, and thee no less, whereas thou didst suffer him to come into my bed: lo thou, two men in one dwelling I will not have; and this shall be Sigurd's death, or thy death, or my death;—for now has he told Gudrun all, and she is mocking me even now!"

CHAPTER XXX. Of the Slaying of Sigurd Fafnir's-bane.

Thereafter Brynhild went out, and sat under her bower-wall, and had many words of wailing to say, and still she cried that all things were loathsome to her, both land and lordship alike, so she might not have Sigurd.

But therewith came Gunnar to her yet again, and Brynhild spake, "Thou shalt lose both realm and wealth, and thy life and me, for I shall fare home to my kin, and abide there in sorrow, unless thou slayest Sigurd and his son; never nourish thou a wolfcub."

Gunnar grew sick at heart thereat, and might nowise see what fearful thing lay beneath it all; he was bound to Sigurd by oath, and this way and that way swung the heart within him; but at the last he bethought him of the measureless shame if his wife went from him, and he said within himself, "Brynhild is better to me than all things else, and the fairest woman of all women, and I will lay down my life rather than lose the love of her." And herewith he called to him his brother and spake,—

"Trouble is heavy on me," and he tells him that he must needs slay Sigurd, for that he has failed him where in he trusted him; "so let us be lords of the gold and the realm withal."

Hogni answers, "Ill it behoves us to break our oaths with wrack and wrong, and withal great aid we have in him; no kings shall be as great as we, if so be the King of the Hun-folk may live; such another brother-in-law never may we get again; bethink thee how good it is to have such a brother-in-law, and such sons to our sister! But well I see how things stand, for this has Brynhild stirred thee up to, and surely shall her counsel drag us into huge shame and scathe."

Gunnar says, "Yet shall it be brought about: and, lo, a rede thereto;—let us egg on our brother Guttorm to the deed; he is young, and of little knowledge, and is clean out of all the oaths moreover."

"Ah, set about in ill wise," says Hogni, "and though indeed it may well be compassed, a due reward shall we gain for the bewrayal of such a man as is Sigurd."

Gunnar says, "Sigurd shall die, or I shall die."

And therewith he bids Brynhild arise and be glad at heart: so she arose, and still ever she said that Gunnar should come no more into her bed till the deed was done.

So the brothers fall to talk, and Gunnar says that it is a deed well worthy of death, that taking of Brynhild's maidenhead; "So come now, let us prick on Guttorm to do the deed."

Therewith they call him to them, and offer him gold and great dominion, as they well have might to do. Yea, and they took a certain worm and somewhat of wolf's flesh and let seethe them together, and gave him to eat of the same, even as the singer sings—

Fish of the wild-wood,
Worm smooth crawling,
With wolf-meat mingled,
They minced for Guttorm;
Then in the beaker,
In the wine his mouth knew,
They set it, still doing
More deeds of wizards.

Wherefore with the eating of this meat he grew so wild and eager, and with all things about him, and with the heavy words of Grimhild, that he gave his word to do the deed; and mighty honour they promised him in reward thereof.

But of these evil wiles naught at all knew Sigurd, for he might not deal with his shapen fate, nor the measure of his life-days, neither deemed he that he was worthy of such things at their hands.

So Guttorm went in to Sigurd the next morning as he lay upon his bed, yet durst he not do aught against him, but shrank back out again; yea, and even so he fared a second time, for so bright and eager were the eyes of Sigurd that few durst look upon him. But the third time he went in, and there lay Sigurd asleep; then Guttorm drew his sword and thrust Sigurd through in such wise that the sword point smote into the bed beneath him; then Sigurd awoke with that wound, and Guttorm gat him unto the door; but therewith Sigurd caught up the sword Gram, and cast it after him, and it smote him on the back, and struck him asunder in the midst,

so that the feet of him fell one way, and the head and hands back into the chamber.

Now Gudrun lay asleep on Sigurd's bosom, but she woke up unto woe that may not be told of, all swimming in the blood of him, and in such wise did she bewail her with weeping and words of sorrow, that Sigurd rose up on the bolster, and spake.

"Weep not," said he, "for thy brothers live for thy delight; but a young son have I, too young to be ware of his foes; and an ill turn have these played against their own fortune; for never will they get a mightier brother-in-law to ride abroad with them; nay, nor a better son to their sister, than this one, if he may grow to man's estate. Lo, now is that come to pass which was foretold me long ago, but from mine eyes has it been hidden, for none may fight against his fate and prevail. Behold this has Brynhild brought to pass, even she who loves me before all men; but this may I swear, that never have I wrought ill to Gunnar, but rather have ever held fast to my oath with him, nor was I ever too much a friend to his wife. And now if I had been forewarned, and had been afoot with my weapons, then should many a man have lost his life or ever I had fallen, and all those brethren should have been slain, and a harder work would the slaying of me have been than the slaying of the mightiest bull or the mightiest boar of the wild-wood."

And even therewithal life left the King; but Gudrun moaned and drew a weary breath, and Brynhild heard it, and laughed when she heard her moaning.

Then said Gunnar, "Thou laughest not because thy heart-roots are gladdened, or else why doth thy visage wax so wan? Sure an evil creature thou art; most like thou art nigh to thy death! Lo now, how meet would it be for thee to behold thy brother Atli slain before thine eyes, and that thou shouldst stand over him dead; whereas we must needs now stand over our brother-in-law in such a case, our brother-in-law and our brother's bane."

She answered, "None need mock at the measure of slaughter being unfulfilled; yet heedeth not Atli your wrath or your threats; yea, he shall live longer than ye, and be a mightier man."

Hogni spake and said, "Now hath come to pass the soothsaying of Brynhild; an ill work not to be atoned for."

And Gudrun said, "My kinsmen have slain my husband; but ye, when ye next ride to the war and are come into the battle, then shall ye look about and see that Sigurd is neither on the right hand nor the left, and ye shall know that he was your good-hap and your strength; and if he had lived and had sons, then should ye have been strengthened by his offspring and his kin."

CHAPTER XXXI. Of the Lamentation of Gudrun over Sigurd dead, as it is told told in ancient Songs.

Gudrun of old days
Drew near to dying
As she sat in sorrow
Over Sigurd;
Yet she sighed not
Nor smote hand on hand,
Nor wailed she aught
As other women.

Then went earls to her.
Full of all wisdom,
Fain help to deal
To her dreadful heart:
Hushed was Gudrun
Of wail, or greeting,
But with a heavy woe
Was her heart a-breaking.

Bright and fair
Sat the great earls' brides,
Gold arrayed
Before Gudrun;
Each told the tale
Of her great trouble,
The bitterest bale
She erst abode.

Then spake Giaflaug,
Giuki's sister:
"Lo upon earth
I live most loveless
Who of five mates
Must see the ending,

Of daughters twain
And three sisters,
Of brethren eight,
And abide behind lonely."

Naught gat Gudrun
Of wail and greeting,
So heavy was she
For her dead husband,
So dreadful-hearted
For the King laid dead there.

Then spake Herborg
Queen of Hunland—
"Crueller tale
Have I to tell of,
Of my seven sons
Down in the Southlands,
And the eighth man, my mate,
Felled in the death-mead.

Father and mother,
And four brothers,
On the wide sea
The winds and death played with;
The billows beat
On the bulwark boards.

Alone must I sing o'er them,
Alone must I array them,
Alone must my hands deal with
Their departing;
And all this was
In one season's wearing,
And none was left
For love or solace.

Then was I bound
A prey of the battle,
When that same season
Wore to its ending;
As a tiring may
Must I bind the shoon
Of the duke's high dame,
Every day at dawning.

From her jealous hate
Gat I heavy mocking,
Cruel lashes
She laid upon me,
Never met I
Better master
Or mistress worse
In all the wide world."

Naught gat Gudrun
Of wail or greeting,
So heavy was she
For her dead husband,
So dreadful-hearted
For the King laid dead there.

Then spake Gullrond,
Giuki's daughter—
"O foster-mother,
Wise as thou mayst be,
Naught canst thou better
The young wife's bale."
And she bade uncover
The dead King's corpse.

She swept the sheet
Away from Sigurd,
And turned his cheek
Towards his wife's knees—
"Look on thy loved one
Lay lips to his lips,
E'en as thou wert clinging
To thy king alive yet!"

Once looked Gudrun—
One look only,
And saw her lord's locks
Lying all bloody,
The great man's eyes
Glazed and deadly,
And his heart's bulwark
Broken by sword-edge.

Back then sank Gudrun,
Back on the bolster,
Loosed was her head array,
Red did her cheeks grow,
And the rain-drops ran
Down over her knees.

Then wept Gudrun,
Giuki's daughter,

So that the tears flowed
Through the pillow;
As the geese withal
That were in the homefield,
The fair fowls the may owned,
Fell a-screaming.

Then spake Gullrond,
Giuki's daughter—
"Surely knew I
No love like your love
Among all men,
On the mould abiding;
Naught wouldst thou joy in
Without or within doors,
O my sister,
Save beside Sigurd."

Then spake Gudrun,
Giuki's daughter—
"Such was my Sigurd
Among the sons of Giuki,
As is the king leek
O'er the low grass waxing,
Or a bright stone
Strung on band,
Or a pearl of price
On a prince's brow.

Once was I counted
By the king's warriors
Higher than any
Of Herjan's mays;
Now am I as little
As the leaf may be,
Amid wind-swept wood
Now when dead he lieth.

I miss from my seat,
I miss from my bed,
My darling of sweet speech.
Wrought the sons of Giuki,
Wrought the sons of Giuki,
This sore sorrow,
Yea, for their sister,
Most sore sorrow.

So may your lands
Lie waste on all sides,
As ye have broken
Your bounden oaths!
Ne'er shalt thou, Gunnar,
The gold have joy of;
The dear-bought rings
Shall drag thee to death,
Whereon thou swarest
Oath unto Sigurd.

Ah, in the days by-gone
Great mirth in the homefield
When my Sigurd
Set saddle on Grani,
And they went their ways
For the wooing of Brynhild!
An ill day, an ill woman,
And most ill hap!"

Then spake Brynhild,
Budli's daughter—
"May the woman lack
Both love and children,
Who gained greeting
For thee, O Gudrun!
Who gave thee this morning
Many words!"

Then spake Gullrond,
Giuki's daughter—
"Hold peace of such words
Thou hated of all folk!
The bane of brave men
Hast thou been ever,
All waves of ill
Wash over thy mind,
To seven great kings
Hast thou been a sore sorrow,
And the death of good will
To wives and women."

Then spake Brynhild,
Budli's daughter—
"None but Atli
Brought bale upon us,
My very brother
Born of Budli.

When we saw in the hall
Of the Hunnish people
The gold a-gleaming
On the kingly Giukings;
I have paid for that faring
Of and full,
And for the sight
That then I saw."

By a pillar she stood
And strained its wood to her;
From the eyes of Brynhild,
Budli's daughter,
Flashed out fire,
And she snorted forth venom,
As the sore wounds she gazed on
Of the dead-slain Sigurd.

CHAPTER XXXII. Of the Ending of Brynhild.

And now none might know for what cause Brynhild must bewail with weeping for what she had prayed for with laughter: but she spake—

"Such a dream I had, Gunnar, as that my bed was acold, and that thou didst ride into the hands of thy foes: lo now, ill shall it go with thee and all thy kin, O ye breakers of oaths; for on the day thou slayedst him, dimly didst thou remember how thou didst blend thy blood with the blood of Sigurd, and with an ill reward hast thou rewarded him for all that he did well to thee; whereas he gave unto thee to be the mightiest of men; and well was it proven how fast he held to his oath sworn, when he came to me and laid betwixt us the sharp-edged sword that in venom had been made hard. All too soon did ye fall to working wrong against him and against me, whenas I abode at home with my father, and had all that I would, and had no will that any one of you should be any of mine, as ye rode into our garth, ye three kings together; but then Atli led me apart privily, and asked me if I would not have him who rode Grani; yea, a man nowise like unto you; but in those days I plighted myself to the son of King Sigmund and no other; and lo, now, no better shall ye fare for the death of me."

Then rose up Gunnar, and laid his arms about her neck, and besought her to live and have wealth from him; and all others in likewise letted her from dying; but she thrust them all from her, and said that it was not the part of any to let her in that which was her will.

Then Gunnar called to Hogni, and prayed him for counsel, and bade him go to her, and see if he might perchance soften her dreadful heart, saying withal, that now they had need enough on their hands in the slaking of her grief, till time might get over.

But Hogni answered, "Nay, let no man hinder her from dying; for no gain will she be to us, nor has she been gainsome since she came hither!"

Now she bade bring forth much gold, and bade all those come thither who would have wealth: then she caught up a sword, and thrust it under her armpit, and sank aside upon the pillows, and said, "Come, take gold whoso will!"

But all held their peace, and she said, "Take the gold, and be glad thereof!"

And therewith she spake unto Gunnar, "Now for a little while will I tell of that which shall come to pass hereafter; for speedily shall ye be at one again with Gudrun by the rede of Grimhild the Wise-wife; and the daughter of Gudrun and Sigurd shall be called Swanhild, the fairest of all women born. Gudrun shall be given to Atli, yet not with her good will. Thou shalt be fain to get Oddrun, but that shall Atli forbid thee; but privily shall ye meet, and much shall she love thee. Atli shall bewray thee, and cast thee into a worm-close, and thereafter shall Atli and his sons be slain, and Gudrun shall be their slayer; and afterwards shall the great waves bear her to the burg of King Jonakr, to whom she shall bear sons of great fame: Swanhild shall be sent from the land and given to King Jormunrek; and her shall bite the rede of Bikki, and therewithal is the kin of you clean gone; and more sorrows therewith for Gudrun.

"And now I pray thee, Gunnar, one last boon.—Let make a great bale on the plain meads for all of us; for me, and for Sigurd, and for those who were slain with him, and let that be covered over

with cloth dyed red by the folk of the Gauls, and burn me thereon on one side of the King of the Huns, and on the other those men of mine, two at the head and two at the feet, and two hawks withal; and even so is all shared equally; and lay there betwixt us a drawn sword, as in the other days when we twain stepped into one bed together; and then may we have the name of man and wife, nor shall the door swing to at the heel of him as I go behind him. Nor shall that be a niggard company if there follow him those five bond-women and eight bondmen, whom my father gave me, and those burn there withal who were slain with Sigurd.

"Now more yet would I say, but for my wounds, but my life-breath flits; the wounds open,—yet have I said sooth."

Now is the dead corpse of Sigurd arrayed in olden wise, and a mighty bale is raised, and when it was somewhat kindled, there was laid thereon the dead corpse of Sigurd Fafnir's-bane, and his son of three winters whom Brynhild had let slay, and Guttorm withal; and when the bale was all ablaze, thereunto was Brynhild borne out, when she had spoken with her bower-maidens, and bid them take the gold that she would give; and then died Brynhild, and was burned there by the side of Sigurd, and thus their life-days ended.

CHAPTER XXXIII. Gudrun wedded to Atli.

Now so it is, that whoso heareth these tidings sayeth, that no such an one as was Sigurd was left behind him in the world, nor ever was such a man brought forth because of all the worth of him, nor may his name ever diminish by eld in the Dutch Tongue nor in all the Northern Lands, while the world standeth fast.

The story tells that, on a day, as Gudrun sat in her bower, she fell to saying, "Better was life in those days when I had Sigurd; he who was far above other men as gold is above iron, or the leek over other grass of the field, or the hart over other wild things; until my brethren begrudged me such a man, the first and best of all men; and so they might not sleep or they had slain him. Huge clamour made Grani when he saw his master and lord sore wounded, and then I spoke to him even as with a man, but he fell drooping down to the earth, for he knew that Sigurd was slain."

Thereafter Gudrun gat her gone into the wild woods, and heard on all ways round about her the howling of wolves, and deemed death a merrier thing than life. Then she went till she came to the hall of King Alf, and sat there in Denmark with Thora, the daughter of Hakon, for seven seasons, and abode with good welcome. And she set forth her needlework before her, and did therein to many deeds and great, and fair plays after the fashion of those days, swords and byrnies, and all the gear of kings, and the ship of King Sigmund sailing along the land; yea, and they wrought there, how they fought, Sigar and Siggeir, south in Fion. Such was their disport; and now Gudrun was somewhat solaced of her grief.

So Grimhild comes to hear where Gudrun has take up her abode, and she calls her sons to talk with her, and asks whether they will make atonement to Gudrun for her son and her husband, and said that it was but meet and right to do so.

Then Gunnar spake, and said that he would atone for her sorrows with gold.

So they send for their friends, and array their horses, their helms, and their shields, and their byrnies, and all their war-gear; and their journey was furnished forth in the noblest wise, and no champion who was of the great men might abide at home; and their horses were clad in mail-coats, and every knight of them had his helm done over with gold or with silver.

Grimhild was of their company, for she said that their errand would never be brought fairly to pass if she sat at home.

There were well five hundred men, and noble men rode with them. There was Waldemar of Denmark, and Eymod and Jarisleif withal. So they went into the hall of King Alf, and there abode them the Longbeards and Franks, and Saxons: they fared with all their war-gear, and had over them red fur-coats. Even as the song says—

Byrnies short cut,
Strong helms hammered,
Girt with good swords,
Red hair gleaming.

They were fain to choose good gifts for their sister, and spake softly to her, but in none of them would she trow. Then Gunnar brought unto her a drink mingled with hurtful things, and this she must needs drink, and with the drinking thereof she had no more memory of their guilt against her.

But in that drink was blended the might of the earth and the sea with the blood of her son; and in that horn were all letters cut and reddened with blood, as is said hereunder—

On the horn's face were there
All the kin of letters
Cut aright and reddened,
How should I rede them rightly?
The ling-fish long
Of the land of Hadding,
Wheat-cars unshorn,
And wild things' inwards.

In that beer were mingled
Many ills together,
Blood of all the wood
And brown-burnt acorns,
The black dew of the hearth,
The God-doomed dead beast's inwards,
And the swine's liver sodden
Because all wrongs that deadens.

And so now, when their hearts are brought anigh to each other, great cheer they made: then came Grimhild to Gudrun, and spake:

"All hail to thee, daughter! I give thee gold and all kinds of good things to take to thee after thy father, dear-bought rings and bed-gear of the maids of the Huns, the most courteous and well dight of all women; and thus is thy husband atoned for: and thereafter shalt thou be given to Atli, the mighty king, and be mistress of all his might. Cast not all thy friends aside for one man's sake, but do according to our bidding."

Gudrun answers, "Never will I wed Atli the King; unseemly it is for us to get offspring betwixt us."

Grimhild says, "Nourish not thy wrath; it shall be to thee as if Sigurd and Sigmund were alive when thou hast borne sons."

Gudrun says, "I cannot take my heart from thoughts of him, for he was the first of all men."

Grimhild says, "So it is shapen that thou must have this king and none else."

Says Gudrun, "Give not this man to me, for an evil thing shall come upon thy kin from him, and to his own sons shall he deal evil, and be rewarded with a grim revenge thereafter."

Then waxed Grimhild fell at those words, and spake, "Do even as we bid thee, and take therefore great honour, and our friendship, and the steeds withal called Vinbjorg and Valbjorg."

And such might was in the words of her, that even so must it come to pass.

Then Gudrun spake, "Thus then must it needs befall, howsoever against the will of me, and for little joy shall it be and for great grief."

Then men leaped on their horses, and their women were set in wains. So they fared four days a-riding and other four a-shipboard, and yet four more again by land and road, till at the last they came to a certain high-built hall; then came to meet Gudrun many folk thronging; and an exceedingly goodly feast was there made, even as the word had gone between either kin, and it passed forth in most proud and stately wise. And at that feast drinks Atli his bridal with Gudrun; but never did her heart laugh on him, and little sweet and kind was their life together.

CHAPTER XXXIV. Atli bids the Giukings to him.

Now tells the tale that on a night King Atli woke from sleep and spake to Gudrun—

"Medreamed," said he, "that thou didst thrust me through with a sword."

Then Gudrun areded the dream, and said that it betokened fire, whenas folk dreamed of iron. "It befalls of thy pride belike, in that thou deemest thyself the first of men."

Atli said, "Moreover I dreamed that here waxed two sorb-tree saplings, and fain I was that they should have no scathe of me; then these were riven up by the roots and reddened with blood, and borne to the bench, and I was bidden eat thereof.

"Yea, yet again I dreamed that two hawks flew from my hand hungry and unfed, and fared to hell, and meseemed their hearts were mingled with honey, and that I ate thereof.

"And then again I dreamed that two fair whelps lay before me yelling aloud, and that the flesh of them I ate, though my will went not with the eating."

Gudrun says, "Nowise good are these dreams, yet shall they come to pass; surely thy sons are nigh to death, and many heavy things shall fall upon us."

"Yet again I dreamed," said he, "and methought I lay in a bath, and folk took counsel to slay me."

Now these things wear away with time, but in nowise was their life together fond.

Now falls Atli to thinking of where may be gotten that plenteous gold which Sigurd had owned, but King Gunnar and his brethren were lords thereof now.

Atli was a great king and mighty, wise, and a lord of many men; and now he falls to counsel with his folk as to the ways of them. He wotted well that Gunnar and his brethren had more wealth than any others might have, and so he falls to the rede of sending men to them, and bidding them to a great feast, and honouring them in diverse wise, and the chief of those messengers was hight Vingi.

Now the queen wots of their conspiring, and misdoubts her that this would mean some beguiling of her brethren: so she cut runes, and took a gold ring, and knit therein a wolf's hair, and gave it into the hands of the king's messengers.

Thereafter they go their ways according to the king's bidding; and or ever they came aland Vingi beheld the runes, and turned them about in such wise as if Gudrun prayed her brethren in her runes to go meet King Atli.

Thereafter they came to the hall of King Gunnar, and had good welcome at his hands, and great fires were made for them, and in great joyance they drank of the best of drink.

Then spake Vingi, "King Atli sends me hither, and is fain that ye go to his house and home in all glory, and take of him exceeding honours, helms and shields, swords and byrnies, gold and goodly raiment, horses, hosts of war, and great and wide lands, for, saith he, he is fainest of all things to bestow his realm and lordship upon you."

Then Gunnar turned his head aside, and spoke to Hogni—

"In what wise shall we take this bidding? might and wealth he bids us take; but no kings know I who have so much gold as we have, whereas we have all the hoard which lay once on Gnita-heath; and great are our chambers, and full of gold, and weapons for smiting, and all kinds of raiment of war, and well I wot that amidst all men my horse is the best, and my sword the sharpest, and my gold the most glorious."

Hogni answers, "A marvel is it to me of his bidding, for seldom hath he done in such a wise, and ill-counselled will it be to wend to him; lo now, when I saw those dear-bought things the king sends us I wondered to behold a wolf's hair knit to a certain gold ring; belike Gudrun deems him to be minded as a wolf towards us, and will have naught of our faring."

But withal Vingi shows him the runes which he said Gudrun had sent.

Now the most of folk go to bed, but these drank on still with certain others; and Kostbera, the wife of Hogni, the fairest of women, came to them, and looked on the runes.

But the wife of Gunnar was Glaumvor, a great-hearted wife.

So these twain poured out, and the kings drank, and were exceeding drunken, and Vingi notes it, and says—

"Naught may I hide that King Atli is heavy of foot and over-old for the warding of his realm; but his sons are young and of no account: now will he give you rule over his realms while they are yet thus young, and most fain will he be that ye have the joy thereof before all others."

Now so it befell both that Gunnar was drunk, and that great dominion was held out to him, nor might he work against the fate shapen for him; so he gave his word to go, and tells Hogni his brother thereof.

But he answered, "Thy word given must even stand now, nor will I fail to follow thee, but most loth am I to this journey."

CHAPTER XXXV. The Dreams of the Wives of the Giukings.

So when men had drunk their fill, they fared to sleep; then falls Kostbera to beholding the runes, and spelling over the letters, and sees that beneath were other things cut, and that the runes are guileful; yet because of her wisdom she had skill to read them aright. So then she goes to bed by her husband; but when they awoke, she spake unto Hogni—

"Thou art minded to wend away from home—ill-counselled is that; abide till another time! Scarce a keen reader of runes art thou, if thou deemest thou hast beheld in them the bidding of thy sister to this journey: lo, I read the runes, and had marvel of so wise a woman as Gudrun is, that she should have miscut them; but that which lieth underneath beareth your bane with it,—yea, either she lacked a letter, or others have dealt guilefully with the runes.

"And now hearken to my dream; for therein methought there fell in upon us here a river exceeding strong, and brake up the timbers of the hall."

He answered, "Full oft are ye evil of mind, ye women, but for me, I was not made in such wise as to meet men with evil who deserve no evil; belike he will give us good welcome."

She answered, "Well, the thing must ye yourselves prove, but no friendship follows this bidding;—but yet again I dreamed that another river fell in here with a great and grimly rush, and tore up the dais of the hall, and brake the legs of both you brethren; surely that betokeneth somewhat."

He answers, "Meadows along our way, whereas thou didst dream of the river; for when we go through the meadows, plentifully doth the seeds of the hay hang about our legs."

"Again I dreamed," she says, "that thy cloak was afire, and that the flame blazed up above the hall."

Says he, "Well, I wot what that shall betoken; here lieth my fair-dyed raiment, and it shall burn and blaze, whereas thou dreamedst of the cloak."

"Methought a bear came in," she says, "and brake up the king's high-seat, and shook his paws in such a wise that we were all adrad thereat, and he gat us all together into the mouth of him, so that we might avail us naught, and thereof fell great horror on us."

He answered, "Some great storm will befall, whereas thou hadst a white bear in thy mind."

"An erne methought came in," she says, "and swept adown the hall, and drenched me and all of us with blood, and ill shall that betoken, for methought it was the double of King Atli."

He answered, "Full oft do we slaughter beasts freely, and smite down great neat for our cheer, and the dream of the erne has but to do with oxen; yea, Atli is heart-whole toward us."

And therewithal they cease this talk.

CHAPTER XXXVI. Of the Journey of the Giukings to King Atli.

Now tells the tale of Gunnar, that in the same wise it fared with him; for when they awoke, Glaumvor his wife told him many dreams which seemed to her like to betoken guile coming; but Gunnar areded them all in other wise.

"This was one of them," said she; "methought a bloody sword was borne into the hall here, wherewith thou wert thrust through, and at either end of that sword wolves howled."

The king answered, "Cur dogs shall bite me belike; blood-stained weapons oft betoken dogs' snappings."

She said, "Yet again I dreamed—that women came in, heavy and drooping, and chose thee for their mate; may-happen these would be thy fateful women."

He answered, "Hard to arede is this, and none may set aside the fated measure of his days, nor is it unlike that my time is short."

So in the morning they arose, and were minded for the journey, but some letted them herein.

Then cried Gunnar to the man who is called Fjornir—

"Arise, and give us to drink goodly wine from great tuns, because mayhappen this shall be very last of all our feasts; for belike if we die the old wolf shall come by the gold, and that bear shall nowise spare the bite of his war-tusks."

Then all the folk of his household brought them on their way weeping.

The son of Hogni said—

"Fare ye well with merry tide."

The more part of their folk were left behind; Solar and Snaevor, the sons of Hogni, fared with them, and a certain great champion, named Orkning, who was the brother of Kostbera.

So folk followed them down to the ships, and all letted them of their journey, but attained to naught therein.

Then spake Glaumvor, and said—

"O Vingi, most like that great ill hap will come of thy coming, and mighty and evil things shall betide in thy travelling."

He answered, "Hearken to my answer; that I lie not aught: and may the high gallows and all things of grame have me, if I lie one word!"

Then cried Kostbera, "Fare ye well with merry days."

And Hogni answered, "Be glad of heart, howsoever it may fare with us!"

And therewith they parted, each to their own fate. Then away they rowed, so hard and fast, that well-nigh the half of the keel slipped away from the ship, and so hard they laid on to the oars that thole and gunwale brake.

But when they came aland they made their ship fast, and then they rode awhile on their noble steeds through the murk wild-wood.

And now they behold the king's army, and huge uproar, and the clatter of weapons they hear from thence; and they see there a mighty host of men, and the manifold array of them, even as they wrought there: and all the gates of the burg were full of men.

So they rode up to the burg, and the gates thereof were shut; then Hogni brake open the gates, and therewith they ride into the burg.

Then spake Vingi, "Well might ye have left this deed undone; go to now, bide ye here while I go seek your gallows-tree! Softly and sweetly I bade you hither, but an evil thing abode thereunder; short while to bide ere ye are tied up to that same tree!"

Hogni answered, "None the more shall we waver for that cause; for little methinks have we shrunk aback whenas men fell to fight; and naught shall it avail thee to make us afraid,—and for an ill fate hast thou wrought."

And therewith they cast him down to earth, and smote him with their axe-hammers till he died.

CHAPTER XXXVII. The Battle in the Burg of King Atli.

Then they rode unto the king's hall, and King Atli arrayed his host for battle, and the ranks were so set forth that a certain wall there was betwixt them and the brethren.

"Welcome hither," said he. "Deliver unto me that plenteous gold which is mine of right; even the wealth which Sigurd once owned, and which is now Gudrun's of right."

Gunnar answered, "Never gettest thou that wealth; and men of might must thou meet here, or ever we lay by life if thou wilt deal with us in battle; ah, belike thou settest forth this feast like a great man, and wouldst not hold thine hand from erne and wolf!"

"Long ago I had it in my mind," said Atli, "to take the lives of you, and be lord of the gold, and reward you for that deed of shame, wherein ye beguiled the best of all your affinity; but now shall I revenge him."

Hogni answered, "Little will it avail to lie long brooding over that rede, leaving the work undone."

And therewith they fell to hard fighting, at the first brunt with shot.

But therewithal came the tidings to Gudrun, and when she heard thereof she grew exceeding wroth, and cast her mantle from her, and ran out and greeted those new-comers, and kissed her brethren, and showed them all love,—and the last of all greetings was that betwixt them.

Then said she, "I thought I had set forth counsels whereby ye should not come hither, but none may deal with his shapen fate." And withal she said, "Will it avail aught to seek for peace?"

But stoutly and grimly they said nay thereto. So she sees that the game goeth sorely against her brethren, and she gathers to her great stoutness of heart, and does on her a mail-coat and takes to her a sword, and fights by her brethren, and goes as far forward as the bravest of man-folk: and all spoke in one wise that never saw any fairer defence than in her.

Now the men fell thick, and far before all others was the fighting of those brethren, and the battle endured a long while unto midday; Gunnar and Hogni went right through the folk of Atli, and so tells the tale that all the mead ran red with blood; the sons of Hogni now had set on stoutly.

Then spake Atli the king, "A fair host and a great have we, and mighty champions withal, and yet have many of us fallen, and but evil am I apaid in that nineteen of my champions are slain, and but left six alive."

And therewithal was there a lull in the battle.

Then spake Atli the king, "Four brethren were we, and now am I left alone; great affinity I gat to me, and deemed my fortune well sped thereby; a wife I had, fair and wise, high of mind, and great of heart; but no joyance may I have of her wisdom, for little peace is betwixt us,—but ye—ye have slain many of my kin, and beguiled me of realm and riches, and for the greatest of all woes have slain my sister withal."

Quoth Hogni, "Why babblest thou thus? thou wert the first to break the peace. Thou didst take my kinswoman and pine her to death by hunger, and didst murder her, and take her wealth; an ugly deed for a king!—meet for mocking and laughter I deem it, that thou must needs make long tale of thy woes; rather will I give thanks to the Gods that thou fallest into ill."

CHAPTER XXXVIII. Of the slaying of the Giukings.

Now King Atli eggs on his folk to set on fiercely, and eagerly they fight; but the Giukings fell on so hard that King Atli gave back into the hall, and within doors was the fight, and fierce beyond all fights.

That battle was the death of many a man, but such was the ending thereof, that there fell all the folk of those brethren, and they twain alone stood up on their feet, and yet many more must fare to hell first before their weapons.

And now they fell on Gunnar the king, and because of the host of men that set on him was hand laid on him, and he was cast into fetters; afterwards fought Hogni, with the stoutest heart and the greatest manlihood; and he felled to earth twenty of the stoutest of the champions of King Atli, and many he thrust into the fire that burnt amidst the hall, and all were of one accord that such a man might scarce be seen; yet in the end was he borne down by many and taken.

Then said King Atli, "A marvellous thing how many men have gone their ways before him! Cut the heart from out of him, and let that be his bane!"

Hogni said, "Do according to thy will; merrily will I abide whatso thou wilt do against me; and thou shalt see that my heart is not adrad, for hard matters have I made trial of ere now, and all things that may try a man was I fain to bear, whiles yet I was unhurt; but now sorely am I hurt, and thou alone henceforth will bear mastery in our dealings together."

Then spake a counsellor of King Atli, "Better rede I see thereto; take me the thrall Hjalli, and give respite to Hogni; for this thrall is made to die, since the longer he lives the less worth shall he be."

The thrall hearkened, and cried out aloft, and fled away anywhither where he might hope for shelter, crying out that a hard portion was his because of their strife and wild doings, and an ill day for him whereon he must be dragged to death from his sweet life and his swine-keeping. But they caught him, and turned a knife against him, and he yelled and screamed or ever he felt the point thereof.

Then in such wise spake Hogni as a man seldom speaketh who is fallen into hard need, for he prayed for the thrall's life, and said that these shrieks he could not away with, and that it were a lesser matter to him to play out the play to the end; and therewithal the

thrall gat his life as for that time: but Gunnar and Hogni are both laid in fetters.

Then spake King Atli with Gunnar the king, and bade him tell out concerning the gold, and where it was, if he would have his life.

But he answered, "Nay, first will I behold the bloody heart of Hogni, my brother."

So now they caught hold of the thrall again, and cut the heart from out of him, and bore it unto King Gunnar, but he said—

"The faint heart of Hjalli may ye here behold, little like the proud heart of Hogni, for as much as it trembleth now, more by the half it trembled whenas it lay in the breast of him."

So now they fell on Hogni even as Atli urged them, and cut the heart from out of him, but such was the might of his manhood, that he laughed while he abode that torment, and all wondered at his worth, and in perpetual memory is it held sithence.

Then they showed it to Gunnar, and he said—

"The mighty heart of Hogni, little like the faint heart of Hjalli, for little as it trembleth now, less it trembled whenas in his breast it lay! But now, O Atli, even as we die so shalt thou die; and lo, I alone wot where the gold is, nor shall Hogni be to tell thereof now; to and fro played the matter in my mind whiles we both lived, but now have I myself determined for myself, and the Rhine river shall rule over the gold, rather than that the Huns shall bear it on the hands of them."

Then said King Atli, "Have away the bondsman;" and so they did.

But Gudrun called to her men, and came to Atli, and said—

"May it fare ill with thee now and from henceforth, even as thou hast ill held to thy word with me!"

So Gunnar was cast into a worm-close, and many worms abode him there, and his hands were fast bound; but Gudrun sent him a harp, and in such wise did he set forth his craft, that wisely he smote the harp, smiting it with his toes, and so excellently well he played, that few deemed they had heard such playing, even when the hand had done it. And with such might and power he played, that all worms fell asleep in the end, save one adder only, great and evil of aspect, that crept unto him and thrust its sting into him until it smote his heart; and in such wise with great hardihood he ended his life days.

CHAPTER XXXIX. The End of Atli and his Kin and Folk.

Now thought Atli the King that he had gained a mighty victory, and spake to Gudrun even as mocking her greatly, or as making himself great before her. "Gudrun," saith he, "thus hast thou lost thy brethren, and thy very self hast brought it about."

She answers, "In good liking livest thou, whereas thou thrustest these slayings before me, but mayhappen thou wilt rue it, when thou hast tried what is to come hereafter; and of all I have, the longest-lived matter shall be the memory of thy cruel heart, nor shall it go well with thee whiles I live."

He answered and said, "Let there be peace betwixt us; I will atone for thy brethren with gold and dear-bought things, even as thy heart may wish."

She answers, "Hard for a long while have I been in our dealings together, and now I say, that while Hogni was yet alive thou mightest have brought it to pass; but now mayest thou never atone for my brethren in my heart; yet oft must we women be overborne by the might of you men; and now are all my kindred dead and gone, and thou alone art left to rule over me: wherefore now this is my counsel that we make a great feast, wherein I will hold the funeral of my brother and of thy kindred withal."

In such wise did she make herself soft and kind in words, though far other things forsooth lay thereunder, but he hearkened to her gladly, and trusted in her words, whereas she made herself sweet of speech.

So Gudrun held the funeral feast for her brethren, and King Atli for his men, and exceeding proud and great was this feast.

But Gudrun forgat not her woe, but brooded over it, how she might work some mighty shame against the king; and at nightfall she took to her the sons of King Atli and her as they played about

the floor; the younglings waxed heavy of cheer, and asked what she would with them.

"Ask me not," she said; "ye shall die, the twain of you!"

Then they answered, "Thou mayest do with thy children even as thou wilt, nor shall any hinder thee, but shame there is to thee in the doing of this deed."

Yet for all that she cut the throats of them.

Then the king asked where his sons were, and Gudrun answered, "I will tell thee, and gladden thine heart by the telling; lo now, thou didst make a great woe spring up for me in the slaying of my brethren; now hearken and hear my rede and my deed; thou hast lost thy sons, and their heads are become beakers on the board here, and thou thyself hast drunken the blood of them blended with wine; and their hearts I took and roasted them on a spit, and thou hast eaten thereof."

King Atli answered, "Grim art thou in that thou hast murdered thy sons, and given me their flesh to eat, and little space passes betwixt ill deed of thine and ill deed."

Gudrun said, "My heart is set on the doing to thee of as great shame as may be; never shall the measure of ill be full to such a king as thou art."

The king said, "Worse deeds hast thou done than men have to tell of, and great un wisdom is there in such fearful redes; most meet art thou to be burned on bale when thou hast first been smitten to death with stones, for in such wise wouldst thou have what thou hast gone a weary way to seek."

She answered, "Thine own death thou foretellest, but another death is fated for me."

And many other words they spake in their wrath.

Now Hogni had a son left alive, hight Niblung, and great wrath of heart he bare against King Atli; and he did Gudrun to wit that he would avenge his father. And she took his words well, and they fell to counsel together thereover, and she said it would be great goodhap if it might be brought about.

So on a night, when the king had drunken, he gat him to bed, and when he was laid asleep, thither to him came Gudrun and the son of Hogni.

Gudrun took a sword and thrust it through the breast of King Atli, and they both of them set their hands to the deed, both she and the son of Hogni.

Then Atli the king awoke with the wound, and cried out; "no need of binding or salving here!—who art thou who hast done the deed?"

Gudrun says, "Somewhat have I, Gudrun, wrought therein, and somewhat withal the son of Hogni."

Atli said, "Ill it beseemed to thee to do this, though somewhat of wrong was between us; for thou wert wedded to me by the rede of thy kin, and dower paid I for thee; yea, thirty goodly knights, and seemingly maidens, and many men besides; and yet wert thou not content, but if thou should rule over the lands King Budli owned: and thy mother-in-law full oft thou lettest sit a-weeping."

Gudrun said, "Many false words hast thou spoken, and of naught I account them; oft, indeed, was I fell of mood, but much didst thou add thereto. Full oft in this thy house did frays befall, and kin fought kin, and friend fought friend, and made themselves big one against the other; better days had I whenas I abode with Sigurd, when we slew kings, and took their wealth to us, but gave peace to whomso would, and the great men laid themselves under our hands, and might we gave to him of them who would have it; then I lost him, and a little thing was it that I should bear a widow's name, but the greatest of griefs that I should come to thee—I who had aforetime the noblest of all kings, while for thee, thou never barest out of the battle aught but the worse lot."

King Atli answered, "Naught true are thy words, nor will this our speech better the lot of either of us, for all is fallen now to naught; but now do to me in seemingly wise, and array my dead corpse in noble fashion."

"Yea, that will I," she says, "and let make for thee a goodly grave, and build for thee a worthy abiding place of stone, and wrap thee in fair linen, and care for all that needful is."

So therewithal he died, and she did according to her word: and then they cast fire into the hall.

And when the folk and men of estate awoke amid that dread and trouble, naught would they abide the fire, but smote each the other down, and died in such wise; so there Atli the king, and all his folk, ended their life-days. But Gudrun had no will to live longer after this deed so wrought, but nevertheless her ending day was not yet come upon her.

Now the Volsungs and the Giukings, as folk tell in tale, have been the greatest-hearted and the mightiest of all men, as ye may well behold written in the songs of old time.

But now with the tidings just told were these troubles stayed.

CHAPTER XL. How Gudrun cast herself into the Sea, but was brought ashore again.

Gudrun had a daughter by Sigurd hight Swanhild; she was the fairest of all women, eager-eyed as her father, so that few durst look under the brows of her; and as far did she excel other woman-kind as the sun excels the other lights of heaven.

But on a day went Gudrun down to the sea, and caught up stones in her arms, and went out into the sea, for she had will to end her life. But mighty billows drave her forth along the sea, and by means of their upholding was she borne along till she came at the last to the burg of King Jonakr, a mighty king, and lord of many folk. And he took Gudrun to wife, and their children were Hamdir, and Sorli, and Erp; and there was Swanhild nourished withal.

CHAPTER XLI. Of the Wedding and Slaying of Swanhild.

Jormunrek was the name of a mighty king of those days, and his son was called Randver. Now this king called his son to talk with him, and said, "Thou shalt fare on an errand of mine to King Jonakr, with my counsellor Bikki, for with King Jonakr is nourished Swanhild, the daughter of Sigurd Fafnir's-bane; and I know for sure that she is the fairest may dwelling under the sun of this world; her above all others would I have to my wife, and thou shalt go woo her for me."

Randver answered, "Meet and right, fair lord, that I should go on thine errands."

So the king set forth this journey in seemingly wise, and they fare till they come to King Jonakr's abode, and behold Swanhild, and have many thoughts concerning the treasure of her goodness.

But on a day Randver called the king to talk with him, and said, "Jormunrek the King would fain be thy brother-in-law, for he has heard tell of Swanhild, and his desire it is to have her to wife, nor may it be shown that she may be given to any mightier man than he is one."

The King says, "This is an alliance of great honour, for a man of fame he is."

Gudrun says, "A wavering trust, the trust in luck that it change not!"

Yet because of the king's furthering, and all the matters that went herewith, is the wooing accomplished; and Swanhild went to the ship with a goodly company, and sat in the stern beside the king's son.

Then spake Bikki to Randver, "How good and right it were if thou thyself had to wife so lovely a woman rather than the old man there."

Good seemed that word to the heart of the king's son, and he spake to her with sweet words, and she to him in like wise.

So they came aland and go unto the king, and Bikki said unto him, "Meet and right it is, lord, that thou shouldst know what is befallen, though hard it be to tell of, for the tale must be concerning thy beguiling, whereas thy son has gotten to him the full love of Swanhild, nor is she other than his harlot; but thou, let not the deed be unavenged."

Now many an ill rede had he given the king or this, but of all his ill redes did this sting home the most; and still would the king hearken to all his evil redes; wherefore he, who might nowise still the wrath within him, cried out that Randver should be taken and tied up to the gallows-tree.

And as he was led to the gallows he took his hawk and plucked the feathers from off it, and bade show it to his father; and when

the king saw it, then he said, "Now may folk behold that he deemeth my honour to be gone away from me, even as the feathers of this hawk;" and therewith he bade deliver him from the gallows.

But in that while had Bikki wrought his will, and Randver was dead-slain.

And, moreover, Bikki spake, "Against none hast thou more wrongs to avenge thee of than against Swanhild; let her die a shameful death."

"Yea," said the king, "we will do after thy counsel."

So she was bound in the gate of the burg, and horses were driven at her to tread her down; but when she opened her eyes wide, then the horses durst not trample her; so when Bikki beheld that, he bade draw a bag over the head of her; and they did so, and therewith she lost her life.

CHAPTER XLII. Gudrun sends her Sons to avenge Swanhild.

Now Gudrun heard of the slaying of Swanhild, and spake to her sons, "Why sit ye here in peace amid merry words, whereas Jormunrek hath slain your sister, and trodden her under foot of horses in shameful wise? No heart ye have in you like to Gunnar or Hogni; verily they would have avenged their kinswoman!"

Hamdir answered, "Little didst thou praise Gunnar and Hogni, whereas they slew Sigurd, and thou wert reddened in the blood of him, and ill were thy brethren avenged by the slaying of thine own sons: yet not so ill a deed were it for us to slay King Jormunrek, and so hard thou pushest us on to this that we may naught abide thy hard words."

Gudrun went about laughing now, and gave them to drink from mighty beakers, and thereafter she got for them great byrnie and good, and all other weed of war.

Then spake Hamdir, "Lo now, this is our last parting, for thou shalt hear tidings of us, and drink one grave-ale over us and over Swanhild."

So therewith they went their ways.

But Gudrun went unto her bower, with heart swollen with sorrow, and spake—

"To three men was I wedded, and first to Sigurd Fafnir's-bane, and he was bewrayed and slain, and of all griefs was that the greatest grief. Then was I given to King Atli, and so fell was my heart toward him that I slew in the fury of my grief his children and mine. Then gave I myself to the sea, but the billows thereof cast me out aland, and to this king then was I given; then gave I Swanhild away out of the land with mighty wealth; and lo, my next greatest sorrow after Sigurd, for under horses' feet was she trodden and slain; but the grimmiest and ugliest of woes was the casting of Gunnar into the Worm-close, and the hardest was the cutting of Hogni's heart from him.

"Ah, better would it be if Sigurd came to meet me, and I went my ways with him, for here bideth now behind with me neither son nor daughter to comfort me. Oh, mindest thou not, Sigurd, the words we spoke when we went into one bed together, that thou wouldst come and look on me; yea, even from thine abiding place among the dead?"

And thus had the words of her sorrow an end.

CHAPTER XLIII. The Latter End of all the Kin of the Giukings.

Now telleth the tale concerning the sons of Gudrun, that she had arrayed their war-raiment in such wise, that no steel would bite thereon; and she bade them play not with stones or other heavy matters, for that it would be to their scathe if they did so.

And now, as they went on their way, they met Erp, their brother, and asked him in what wise he would help them.

He answered, "Even as hand helps hand, or foot helps foot."

But that they deemed naught at all, and slew him there and then. Then they went their ways, nor was it long or ever Hamdir stumbled, and thrust down his hand to steady himself, and spake therewith—

"Naught but a true thing spake Erp, for now should I have fallen, had not hand been to steady me."

A little after Sorli stumbled, but turned about on his feet, and so stood, and spake—

"Yea now had I fallen, but that I steadied myself with both feet."

And they said they had done evilly with Erp their brother.

But on they fare till they come to the abode of King Jormunrek, and they went up to him and set on him forthwith, and Hamdir cut both hands from him and Sorli both feet. Then spake Hamdir—

"Off were the head if Erp were alive; our brother, whom we slew on the way, and found out our deed too late." Even as the Song says,—

Off were the head
If Erp were alive yet,
Our brother the bold,
Whom we slew by the way,
The well-famed in warfare.

Now in this must they turn away from the words of their mother, whereas they had to deal with stones. For now men fell on them, and they defended themselves in good and manly wise, and were the scathe of many a man, nor would iron bite on them.

But there came thereto a certain man, old of aspect and one-eyed, and he spake—

"No wise men are ye, whereas ye cannot bring these men to their end."

Then the king said, "Give us rede thereto, if thou canst."

He said, "Smite them to the death with stones."

In such wise was it done, for the stones flew thick and fast from every side, and that was the end of their life-days.

And now has come to an end the whole root and stem of the Giukings.

NOW MAY ALL EARLS
BE BETTERED IN MIND,
MAY THE GRIEF OF ALL MAIDENS
EVER BE MINISHED,
FOR THIS TALE OF TROUBLE
SO TOLD TO ITS ENDING.

APPENDIX: EXCERPTS FROM THE POETIC EDDA.

PART OF THE SECOND LAY OF HELGI HUNDINGS-BANE

Helgi wedded Sigrun, and they begate sons together, but Helgi lived not to be old; for Dag, the son of Hogni, sacrificed to Odin, praying that he might avenge his father. So Odin lent Dag his spear, and Dag met Helgi, his brother-in-law, at a place called Fetter-grove, and thrust him through with that spear, and there fell Helgi dead; but Dag rode to Sevafell, and told Sigrun of the news.

DAG:
Loth am I, sister
Of sorrow to tell thee,
For by hard need driven
Have I drawn on the greeting;
This morning fell
In Fetter-grove
The king well deemed
The best in the wide world,
Yea, he who stood
On the necks of the strong."

SIGRUN:
All oaths once sworn
Shall bite thee sore,
The oaths that to Helgi
Once thou swarest
At the bright white
Water of Lightening,
And at the cold rock
That the sea runneth over.

May the ship sweep not on
That should sweep at its swiftest,
Though the wind desired
Behind thee driveth!
May the horse never run
That should run at his most might
When from thy foe's face
Thou hast most need to flee!

May the sword never bite
That thou drawest from scabbard

But and if round thine head
In wrath it singeth!

Then should meet price be paid
For Helgi's slaying
When a wolf thou wert
Out in the wild-wood,
Empty of good things
Empty of gladness,
With no meat for thy mouth
But dead men's corpses!

DAG:
With mad words thou ravest,
Thy wits are gone from thee,
When thou for thy brother
Such ill fate biddest;
Odin alone
Let all this bale loose,
Casting the strife-runes
'Twixt friends and kindred.

Rings of red gold
Will thy brother give thee,
And the stead of Vandil
And the lands of Vigdale;
Have half of the land
For thy sorrow's healing,
O ring-arrayed sweetling
For thee and thy sons!

SIGRUN:
No more sit I happy
At Sevafell;
At day-dawn, at night
Naught love I my life
Till broad o'er the people
My lord's light breaketh;
Till his war-horse runneth
Beneath him hither,
Well went to the gold bit—
Till my king I welcome.

In such wise did Helgi
Deal fear around
To all his foes
And all their friends
As when the goat runneth
Before the wolf's rage
Filled with mad fear
Down from the fell.

As high above all lords
Did Helgi beat him
As the ash-tree's glory
From the thorn ariseth,
Or as the fawn
With the dew-fell sprinkled
Is far above
All other wild things,
As his horns go gleaming
'Gainst the very heavens.

A barrow was raised above Helgi, but when he came in Valhall,
then Odin bade him be lord of all things there, even as he; so Helgi
sang—

HELGI:
Now shalt thou, Hunding
For the help of each man
Get ready the foot-bath,
And kindle the fire;
The hounds shalt thou bind
And give heed to the horses,
Give wash to the swine
Ere to sleep thou goest.

A bondmaid of Sigrun went in the evening-tide by Helgi's
mound, and there saw how Helgi rode toward it with a great com-
pany; then she sang—

BONDMAID:
It is vain things' beguiling
That methinks I behold,
Or the ending of all things,
As ye ride, O ye dead men,
Smiting with spurs
Your horses' sides?
Or may dead warriors
Wend their ways homeward?

THE DEAD:
No vain things' beguiling
Is that thou beholdest,
Nor the ruin of all things;

Though thou lookest upon us,
Though we smite with spurs
Our horses' sides;
Rather dead warriors
May wend their ways homeward.

Then went the bondmaid home, and told Sigrun, and sang—

BONDMAID:
Go out, Sigrun
From Sevafell,
If thou listest to look on
The lord of thy people!
For the mound is uncovered
Thither is Helgi come,
And his wounds are bleeding,
But the king thee biddeth
To come and stay
That stream of sorrow.

So Sigrun went into the mound to Helgi, and sang—

SIGRUN:
Now am I as fain
Of this fair meeting,
As are the hungry
Hawks of Odin,
When they wot of the slaying
Of the yet warm quarry,
Or bright with dew
See the day a-dawning.

Ah, I will kiss
My king laid lifeless,
Ere thou castest by
Thy blood-stained byrny.
O Helgi, thy hair
Is thick with death's rime,
With the dew of the dead
Is my love all dripping;
Dead-cold are the hands
Of the son of Hogni;
How for thee, O my king,
May I win healing?

HELGI:
Thou alone, Sigrun
Of Sevafell,
Hast so done that Helgi
With grief's dew drippeth;
O clad in gold
Cruel tears thou weepst,
Bright May of the Southlands,
Or ever thou sleepest;
Each tear in blood falleth
On the breast of thy lord,
Cold wet and bitter-sharp
Swollen with sorrow.

Ah, we shall drink
Dear draughts and lovely,
Though, we have lost
Both life and lands;
Neither shall any
Sing song of sorrow,
Though in my breast
Be wounds wide to behold:
For now are brides
In the mound abiding;
Kings' daughters sit
By us departed.

Bow Sigrun arrayed a bed in the mound, and sang—

SIGRUN:
Here, Helgi, for thee
A bed have I dight,
Kind without woe,
O kin of the Ylfings!
To thy bosom, O king,
Will I come and sleep soft,
As I was wont
When my lord was living.

HELGI:
Now will I call
Naught not to be hoped for
Early or late
At Sevafell,
When thou in the arms
Of a dead man art laid,
White maiden of Hogni,
Here in the mound:
And thou yet quick,
O King's daughter!

Now needs must I ride
On the reddening ways;
My pale horse must tread
The highway aloft;
West must I go
To Windhelm's bridge
Ere the war-winning crowd
Hall-crower waketh.

So Helgi rode his ways: and the others gat them gone home to the house. But the next night Sigrun bade the bondwoman have heed of the mound. So at nightfall, thenas Sigrun came to the mound, she sang:

SIGRUN:
Here now would he come,
If to come he were minded;
Sigmund's offspring
From the halls of Odin.
O me the hope waneth
Of Helgi's coming;
For high on the ash-boughs
Are the ernes abiding,
And all folk drift
Toward the Thing of the dreamland.

BONDMAID:
Be not foolish of heart,
And fare all alone
To the house of the dead,
O Hero's daughter!
For more strong and dreadful
In the night season
Are all dead warriors
Than in the daylight.

But a little while lived Sigrun, because of her sorrow and trouble. But in old time folk trowed that men should be born again, though their troth be now deemed but an old wife's dotting. And so, as folk say, Helgi and Sigrun were born again, and at that tide was he called Helgi the Scathe of Hadding, and she Kara the daughter of Halfdan; and she was a Valkyrie, even as is said in the Lay of Kara.

PART OF THE LAY OF SIGRDRIFA

Now this is my first counsel,
That thou with thy kin
Be guiltless, guileless ever,
Nor hasty of wrath,
Despite of wrong done—
Unto the dead good that doeth.

Lo the second counsel,
That oath thou swearest never,
But trusty oath and true:
Grim tormenting
Gripes troth-breakers;
Cursed wretch is the wolf of vows.

This is my third rede,
That thou at the Thing
Deal not with the fools of folk;
For unwise man
From mouth lets fall
Worser word than well he wotteth.

Yet hard it is
That holding of peace
When men shall deem thee dastard,
Or deem the lie said soothly;
But woeful is home-witness,
Unless right good thou gettest it.
Ah, on another day
Drive the life from out him,
And pay the liar back for his lying.

Now behold the fourth rede:
If ill witch thee bideth,
Woe-begatting by the way,
Good going further
Rather than guesting,
Though thick night be on thee.

Far-seeing eyes
Need all sons of men
Who wend in wrath to war;
For baleful women
Bide oft by the highway,
Swords and hearts to soften.

And now the fifth rede:
As fair as thou seest

Brides on the bench abiding,
Let not love's silver
Rule over thy sleeping;
Draw no woman to kind kissing!

For the sixth thing, I rede
When men sit a-drinking
Amid ale-words and ill-words,
Dead thou naught
With the drunken fight-staves
For wine stealeth wit from many.

Brawling and drink
Have brought unto men
Sorrow sore oft enow;
Yea, bane unto some,
And to some weary bale;
Many are the griefs of mankind.

For the seventh, I rede thee,
If strife thou raigest
With a man right high of heart,
Better fight a-field
Than burn in the fire
Within thine hall fair to behold.

The eighth rede that I give thee:
Unto all ill look thou,
And hold thine heart from all beguiling;
Draw to thee no maiden,
No man's wife bewray thou,
Urge them not unto unmeet pleasure.

This is the ninth counsel:
That thou have heed of dead folk
Whereso thou findest them a-field;
Be they sick-dead,
Be they sea-dead,
Or come to ending by war-weapons.

Let bath be made
For such men fordone,
Wash thou hands and feet thereof,
Comb their hair and dry them
Ere the coffin has them;
Then bid them sleep full sweetly.

This for the tenth counsel:
That thou give trust never
Unto oaths of foeman's kin,
Be'st thou bane of his brother,
Or hast thou felled his father;
Wolf in young son waxes,
Though he with gold be gladdened.

For wrong and hatred
Shall rest them never,
Nay, nor sore sorrow.
Both wit and weapons
Well must the king have
Who is fain to be the foremost.

The last rede and eleventh:
Until all ill look thou,
And watch thy friends' ways ever
Scarce durst I look
For long life for thee, king:
Strong trouble ariseth now already.

THE LAY CALLED THE SHORT LAY OF SIGURD.

Sigurd of yore,
Sought the dwelling of Giuki,
As he fared, the young Volsung,
After fight won;
Troth he took
From the two brethren;
Oath swore they betwixt them,
Those bold ones of deed.

A may they gave to him
And wealth manifold,
Gudrun the young,
Giuki's daughter:
They drank and gave doom
Many days together,
Sigurd the young,
And the sons of Giuki.

Until they wended
For Brynhild's wooing,
Sigurd a-riding
Amidst their rout;
The wise young Volsung
Who knew of all ways—

Ah! He had wed her,
Had fate so willed it.

Southlander Sigurd
A naked sword,
Bright, well grinded,
Laid betwixt them;
No kiss he won
From the fair woman,
Nor in arms of his
Did the Hun King hold her,
Since he gat the young maid
For the son of Giuki.

No lack in her life
She wotted of now,
And at her death-day
No dreadful thing
For a shame indeed
Or a shame in seeming;
But about and betwixt
Went baleful fate.

Alone, abroad,
She sat of an evening,
Of full many things
She fall a-talking:
"O for my Sigurd!
I shall have death,
Or my fair, my lovely,
Laid in mine arms.

For the word once spoken,
I sorrow sorely—
His queen is Gudrun,
I am wed to Gunnar;
The dread Norms wrought for us
A long while of woe."

Oft with heart deep
In dreadful thoughts,
O'er ice-fields and ice-hills
She fared a-night time,
When he and Gudrun
Were gone to their fair bed,
And Sigurd wrapped
The bed-gear round her.

Ah! Now the Hun King
His queen in arms holdeth,
While love I go lacking,
And all things longed for
With no delight
But in dreadful thought."

These dreadful things
Thrust her toward murder:
—"Listen, Gunnar,
For thou shalt lose
My wide lands,
Yea, me myself!
Never love I my life,
With thee for my lord—

I will fare back thither
From whence I came,
To my nighest kin
And those that know me
There shall I sit
Sleeping my life away,
Unless thou slayest
Sigurd the Hun King,
Making thy might more
E'en than his might was!

Yea, let the son fare
After the father,
And no young wolf
A long while nourish!
For on earth man lieth
Vengeance lighter,
And peace shall be surer
If the son live not."

Adrad was Gunnar,
Heavy-hearted was he,
And in doubtful mood
Day-long he sat.
For naught he wotted,
Nor might see clearly
What was the seemliest
Of deeds to set hand to;
What of all deeds
Was best to be done:
For he minded the vows
Sworn to the Volsung,

And the sore wrong
To be wrought against Sigurd.

Wavered his mind
A weary while,
No wont it was
Of those days worn by,
That queens should flee
From the realms of their kings.

Brynhild to me
Is better than all,
The child of Budli
Is the best of women.
Yea, and my life
Will I lay down,
Ere I am twinned
From that woman's treasure."

He bade call Hogni
To the place where he bided;
With all the trust that might be,
Trowed he in him.

Wilt thou bewray Sigurd
For his wealth's sake?
Good it is to rule
O'er the Rhine's metal;
And well content
Great wealth to wield,
Biding in peace
And blissful days."

One thing alone Hogni
Had for an answer:
"Such doings for us
Are naught seemly to do;
To rend with sword
Oaths once sworn,
Oaths once sworn,
And troth once plighted.

Nor know we on mould,
Men of happier days,
The while we four
Rule over the folk;
While the bold in battle,
The Hun King, bides living.

And no nobler kin
Shall be known afield,
If our five sons
We long may foster;
Yea, a goodly stem
Shall surely wax.
—But I clearly see
In what wise it standeth,
Brynhild's sore urging
O'ermuch on thee beareth.

Guttorm shall we
Get for the slaying,
Our younger brother
Bare of wisdom;
For he was out of
All the oaths sworn,
All the oaths sworn,
And the plighted troth."

Easy to rouse him
Who of naught recketh!
—Deep stood the sword
In the heart of Sigurd.

There, in the hall,
Gat the high-hearted vengeance;
For he can his sword
At the reckless slayer:
Out at Guttorm
Flew Gram the mighty,
The gleaming steel
From Sigurd's hand.

Down fell the slayer
Smitten asunder;
The heavy head
And the hands fell one way,
But the feet and such like
Aback where they stood.

Gudrun was sleeping
Soft in the bed,
Empty of sorrow
By the side of Sigurd:
When she awoke
With all pleasure gone,
Swimming in blood
Of Frey's beloved.

So sore her hands
 She smote together,
 That the great-hearted
 Gat raised in bed;
 —"O Gudrun, weep not
 So woefully,
 Sweet lovely bride,
 For thy brethren live for thee!

A young child have I
 For heritor;
 Too young to win forth
 From the house of his foes.—
 Black deeds and ill
 Have they been a-doing,
 Evil rede
 Have they wrought at last.

Late, late, rideth with them
 Unto the Thing,
 Such sister's son,
 Though seven thou bear,—
 —But well I wot
 Which way all goeth;
 Alone wrought Brynhild
 This bale against us.

That maiden loved me
 Far before all men,
 Yet wrong to Gunnar
 I never wrought;
 Brotherhood I heeded
 And all bounden oaths,
 That none should deem me
 His queen's darling."

Weary sighed Gudrun,
 As the king gat ending,
 And so sore her hands
 She smote together,
 That the cups arow
 Rang out therewith,
 And the geese cried on high
 That were in the homefield.

Then laughed Brynhild
 Budli's daughter,
 Once, once only,
 From out her heart;
 When to her bed
 Was borne the sound
 Of the sore greeting
 Of Giuki's daughter.

Then, quoth Gunnar,
 The king, the hawk-bearer,
 "Whereas, thou laughest,
 O hateful woman,
 Glad on thy bed,
 No good it betokeneth:
 Why lackest thou else
 Thy lovely hue?
 Feeder of foul deeds,
 Fey do I deem thee,

Well worthy art thou
 Before all women,
 That thine eyes should see
 Atli slain of us;
 That thy brother's wounds
 Thou shouldst see a-bleeding,
 That his bloody hurts
 Thine hands should bind."

No man blameth thee, Gunnar,
 Thou hast fulfilled death's measure
 But naught Atli feareth
 All thine ill will;
 Life shall he lay down
 Later than ye,
 And still bear more might
 Aloft than thy might.

I shall tell thee, Gunnar,
 Though well the tale thou knowest,
 In what early days
 Ye dealt abroad your wrong:
 Young was I then,
 Worn with no woe,
 Good wealth I had
 In the house of my brother!

No mind had I
 That a man should have me,
 Or ever ye Giukings,
 Rode into our garth;
 There ye sat on your steeds

Three kings of the people—
 —Ah! That that faring
 Had never befallen!

Then spake Atli
 To me apart,
 And said that no wealth
 He would give unto me,
 Neither gold nor lands
 If I would not be wedded;
 Nay, and no part
 Of the wealth apportioned,
 Which in my first days
 He gave me duly;
 Which in my first days
 He counted down.

Wavered the mind
 Within me then,
 If to fight I should fall
 And the felling of folk,
 Bold in Byrny
 Because of my brother;
 A deed of fame
 Had that been to all folk,
 But to many a man
 Sorrow of mind.

So I let all sink
 Into peace at the last:
 More grew I minded
 For the mighty treasure,
 The red-shining rings
 Of Sigmund's son;
 For no man's wealth else
 Would I take unto me.

For myself had I given
 To that great king
 Who sat amid gold
 On the back of Grani;
 Nought were his eyes
 Like to your eyen,
 Nor in any wise
 Went his visage with yours;
 Though ye might deem you
 Due kings of men.

One I loved,
 One, and none other,
 The gold-decked may
 Had no doubtful mind;
 Thereof shall Atli
 Wot full surely,
 When he getteth to know
 I am gone to the dead.

Far be it from me,
 Feeble and wavering,
 Ever to love
 Another's love—
 —Yes shall my woe
 Be well avenged."

Up rose Gunnar,
 The great men's leader,
 And cast his arms
 About the queen's neck;
 And all went nigh
 One after other,
 With their whole hearts
 Her heart to turn.

But then all these
 From her neck she thrust,
 Of her long journey
 No man should let her.

Then called he Hogni
 To have talk with him;
 "Let all folk go
 Forth into the hall,
 Thine with mine—
 —O need sore and mighty!—
 To wot if we yet
 My wife's parting may stay.
 Till with time's wearing
 Some hindrance wax."

One answer Hogni
 Had for all;
 "Nay, let hard need
 Have rule thereover,
 And no man let her
 Of her long journey!
 Never born again,
 May she come back thence!

Luckless she came
To the lap of her mother,
Born into the world
For utter woe,
TO many a man
For heart-whole mourning."

Upraised he turned
From the talk and the trouble,
To where the gem-field
Dealt out goodly treasure;
As she looked and beheld
All the wealth that she had,
And the hungry bondmaids,
And maids of the hall.

With no good in her heart
She donned her gold byrny,
Ere she thrust the sword point
Through the midst of her body:
On the boister's far side
Sank she adown,
And, smitten with sword,
Still bethought her of redes.

Let all come forth
Who are fain the red gold,
Or things less worthy
To win from my hands;
To each one I give
A necklace gilt over,
Wrought hangings and bed=gear,
And bright woven weed."

All they kept silence,
And thought what to speak,
Then all at once
Answer gave:
"Full enow are death-doomed,
Fain are we to live yet,
Maids of the hall
All meet work winning."

From her wise heart at last
The linen-clad damsel,
The one of few years
Gave forth the word:
"I will that none driven
By hand or by word,
For our sake should lose
Well-loved life.

Thou on the bones of you
Surely shall burn,
Less dear treasure
At your departing
Nor with Menia's Meal
Shall ye come to see me."

Sit thee down, Gunnar,
A word must I say to thee
Of the life's ruin
Of thy lightsome bride—
—Nor shall thy ship
Swim soft and sweetly
For all that I
Lay life adown.

Sooner than ye might deem
Shall ye make peace with Gudrun,
For the wise woman
Shall full in the young wife
The hard memory
Of her dead husband.

There is a may born
Reared by her mother,
Whiter and brighter
Than is the bright day;
She shall be Swanhild,
She shall be Sunbeam.

Thou shalt give Gudrun
Unto a great one,
Noble, well-praised
Of the world's folk;
Not with her goodwill,
Or love shalt thou give her;
Yet will Atli
Come to win her,
My very brother,
Born of Budli.

—"Ah! Many a memory
Of how ye dealt with me,
How sorely, how evilly
Ye ever beguiled me,

How all pleasure left me
The while my life lasted—!

Fain wilt thou be
Oddrun to win,
But thy good liking
Shall Atli let;
But in secret wise
Shall ye win together,
And she shall love thee
As I had loved thee,
If in such wise
Fare had willed it.

But with all ill
Shall Atli sting thee,
Into the strait worm-close
Shall he cast thee.

But no long space
Shall slip away
Ere Atli too
All life shall lose,
Yea, all his weal
With the life of his sons,
For a dreadful bed
Dights Gudrun for him,
From a heart sore laden,
With the sword's sharp edge.

More seemly for Gudrun,
Your very sister,
In death to wend after
Her love first wed;
Had but good rede
To her been given,
Or if her heart
Had been like to my heart.

—"Faint my speech groweth—
But for our sake
Ne'er shall she lose
Her life beloved;
The sea shall have her,
High billows bear her
Forth unto Jonakr's
Fair land of his fathers.

There shall she bear sons,
Stays of a heritage,
Stays of a heritage,
Jonakr's sons;
And Swanhild shall she
Send from the land,
That may born of her,
The may born of Sigurd.

Her shall bite
The rede of Bikki,
Whereas for no good
Wins Jormunrek life;
And so is clean perished
All the kin of Sigurd,
Yea, and more greeting,
And more for Gudrun.

And now one prayer
Yet pray I of thee—
That last word of mine
Here in the world—
So broad on the field
Be the burg of the dead
That fair space may be left
For us all to lie down,
All those that died
At Sigurd's death!

Hang round that burg
Fair hangings and shields,
Web by Gauls woven,
And folk of the Gauls:
There burn the Hun King
Lying beside me.

But on the other side
Burn by the Hun King
Those who served me
Strewn with treasure;
Two at the head,
And two at the feet,
Two hounds therewith,
And two hawks moreover:
Then is all dealt
With even dealing.

Lay there amidst us
The right-dight metal,

The sharp-edged steel,
That so lay erst;
When we both together
Into one bed went,
And were called by the name
Of man and wife.

Never, then, belike
Shall clash behind him
Valhall's bright door
With rings bedight:
And if my fellowship
Followeth after,
In no wretched wise
Then shall we wend.

For him shall follow
My five bondmaids,
My eight bondsmen,
No borel folk:
Yea, and my fosterer,
And my father's dower
That Budli of old days
Gave to his dear child.

Much have I spoken,
More would I speak,
If the sword would give me
Space for speech;
But my words are waning,
My wounds are swelling—
Naught but truth have I told—
—And now make I ending.

THE HELL-RIDE OF BRYNHILD.

After the death of Brynhild were made two bales, one for Sigurd, and that was first burned; but Brynhild was burned on the other, and she was in a chariot hung about with goodly hangings.

And so folk say that Brynhild drave in her chariot down along the way to Hell, and passed by an abode where dwelt a certain giantess, and the giantess spake:—

THE GIANT-WOMAN
"Nay, with my goodwill
Never goest thou
Through this stone-pillared
Stead of mine!
More seemly for thee
To sit sewing the cloth,
Than to go look on
The love of another.

What dost thou, going
From the land of the Gauls,
O restless head,
To this mine house?
Golden girl, hast thou not,
If thou listest to hearken,
In sweet wise from thy hands
The blood of men washen?"

BRYNHILD
"Nay, blame me naught,
Bride of the rock-hall,
Though I roved a warring
In the days that were;
The higher of us twain
Shall I ever be holden
When of our kind
Men make account."

THE GIANT-WOMAN
"Thou, O Brynhild,
Budli's daughter,
Wert the worst ever born
Into the world;
For Giuki's children
Death hast thou gotten,
And turned to destruction
Their goodly dwelling."

BRYNHILD
"I shall tell thee
True tale from my chariot,
O thou who naught wottest,
If thou listest to wot;
How for me they have gotten
Those heirs of Giuki,
A loveless life,
A life of lies.

Hild under helm,
The Hlymdale people,

E'en those who knew me,
Ever would call me.

The changeful shapes
Of us eight sisters,
The wise king bade
Under oak-tree to bear;
Of twelve winters was I,
If thou listest to wot,
When I sware to the young lord
Oaths of love.

Thereafter gat I
Mid the folk of the Goths,
For Helmgunnar the old,
Swift journey to Hell,
And gave to Aud's brother
The young, gain and glory;
Whereof overwrath
Waxed Odin with me.

So he shut me in shield-wall
In Skata grove,
Red shields and white
Close set around me;
And bade him alone
My slumber to break
Who in no land
Knew how to fear.

He set round my hall,
Toward the south quarter,
The Bane of all trees
Burning aloft;
And ruled that he only
Thereover should ride
Who should bring me the gold
O'er which Fafnir brooded.

Then upon Grani rode
The goodly gold-strewer
To where my fosterer
Ruled his fair dwelling.
He who alone there
Was deemed best of all,
The War-lord of the Danes,
Well worthy of men.

In peace did we sleep
Soft in one bed,
As though he had been
Naught but my brother:
There as we lay
Through eight nights wearing,
No hand in love
On each other we laid.

Yet thence blamed me, Gudrun,
Giuki's daughter,
That I had slept
In the arms of Sigurd;
And then I wotted
As I fain had not wotted,
That they had bewrayed me
In my betrothals.

Ah! For unrest
All too long
Are men and women
Made alive!
Yet we twain together
Shall wear through the ages,
Sigurd and I.—
—Sink adown, O giant-wife!

FRAGMENTS OF THE LAY OF BRYNHILD

HOGNI SAID:
"What hath wrought Sigurd
Of any wrong-doing
That the life of the famed one
Thou art fain of taking?"

GUNNAR SAID:
"To me has Sigurd
Sworn many oaths,
Sworn many oaths,
And sworn them lying,
And he bewrayed me
When it behoved him
Of all folk to his troth
To be the most trusty."

HOGNI SAID:
"Thee hath Brynhild
Unto all bale,
And all hate whetted,

And a work of sorrow;
For she grudges to Gudrun
All goodly life;
And to thee the bliss
Of her very body:"

.....

Some the wolf roasted,
Some minced the worm,
Some unto Guttorm
Gave the wolf-meat,
Or ever they might
In their lust for murder
On the high king
Lay deadly hand.

Sigurd lay slain
On the south of the Rhine
High from the fair tree
Croaked forth the raven,
"Ah, yet shall Atli
On you redden edges,
The old oaths shall weigh
On your souls, O warriors:"

Without stood Gudrun,
Giuki's daughter,
And the first word she said
Was even this word:
"Where then is Sigurd,
Lord of the Warfolk,
Since my kin
Come riding the foremost?"

One word Hogni
Had for an answer:
"Our swords have smitten
Sigurd asunder,
And the grey horse hangs drooping
O'er his lord lying dead:"

Then quoth Brynhild,
Budli's daughter:
"Good weal shall ye have
Of weapons and lands,
That Sigurd alone
Would surely have ruled
If he had lived
But a little longer.

Ah, nothing seemly
For Sigurd to rule
Giuki's house
And the folk of the Goths,
When of him five sons
For the slaying of men,
Eager for battle,
Should have been begotten!"

Then laughed Brynhild—
Loud rang the whole house—
One laugh only
From out her heart:
"Long shall your bliss be
Of lands and people,
Whereas the famed lord
You have felled to the earth!"

Then spake Gudrun,
Giuki's daughter:
"Much thou speakest,
Many things fearful,
All grame be on Gunnar
The bane of Sigurd!
From a heart full of hate
Shall come heavy vengeance:"

Forth sped the even
Enow there was drunken,
Full enow was there
Of all soft speech;
And all men got sleep
When to bed they were gotten;
Gunnar only lay waking
Long after all men.

His feet fell he to moving,
Fell to speak to himself
The waster of men,
Still turned in his mind
What on the bough
Those twain would be saying,
The raven and erne,
As they rode their ways homeward.

But Brynhild awoke,
Budli's daughter,

May of the shield-folk,
A little ere morning:
"Thrust ye on, hold ye back,
—Now all harm is wrought,—
To tell of my sorrow,
Or to let all slip by me?"

All kept silence
After her speaking,
None might know
That woman's mind,
Or why she must weep
To tell of the work
That laughing once
Of men she prayed.

BRYNHILD SPAKE:
"In dreams, O Gunnar,
Grim things fell on me;
Dead-cold the hall was,
And my bed was a-cold,
And thou, lord, wert riding
Reft of all bliss,
Laden with fetters
'Mid the host of thy foemen."

So now all ye,
O House of the Niblungs,
Shall be brought to naught,
O ye oath-breakers!

Think'st thou not, Gunnar,
How that betid,
When ye let the blood run
Both in one footstep?
With ill reward
Hast thou rewarded
His heart so fain
To be the foremost!

As well was seen
When he rode his ways,
That king of all worth,
Unto my wooing;
How the host-destroyer
Held to the vows
Sworn beforetime,
Sworn to the young king.

For his wounding-wand
All wrought with gold,
The king beloved
Laid between us;
Without were its edges
Wrought with fire,
But with venom-drops
Deep dyed within.

Thus this song telleth of the death of Sigurd, and setteth forth how that they slew him without doors; but some say that they slew him within doors, sleeping in his bed. But the Dutch Folk say that they slew him out in the wood: and so sayeth the ancient song of Gudrun, that Sigurd and the sons of Giuki were riding to the Thing whenas he was slain. But all with one accord say that they bewrayed him in their troth with him, and fell on him as he lay unarrayed and unawares.

THE SECOND OR ANCIENT LAY OF GUDRUN.

Thiodrek the King was in Atli's house, and had lost there the more part of his men: so there Thiodrek and Gudrun bewailed their troubles one to the other, and she spake and said:—

A may of all mays
My mother reared me
Bright in bower;
Well loved I my brethren,
Until that Giuki
With gold arrayed me,
With gold arrayed me,
And gave me to Sigurd.

Such was my Sigurd,
Among the sons of Giuki
As is the green leek
O'er the low grass waxen,
Or a hart high-limbed
Over hurrying deer,
Or glede-red gold
Over grey silver.

Till me they begrudged,
Those my brethren,

The fate to have him,
Who was first of all men;
Nor might they sleep,
Nor sit a-dooming,
Ere they let slay
My well-loved Sigurd.

Grani ran to the Thing,
There was clatter to hear,
But never came Sigurd
Himself thereunto;
All the saddle-girt beasts
With blood were besprinkled,
As faint with the way
Neath the slayers they went.

Then greeting I went
With Grani to talk,
And with tear-furrowed cheeks
I bade him tell all,
But drooping laid Grani,
His head in the grass,
For the steed well wotted
Of his master's slaying.

A long while I wandered,
Long my mind wavered,
Ere the kings I might ask
Concerning my king.

Then Gunnar hung head,
But Hogni told
Of the cruel slaying
Of my Sigurd:
"On the water's far side
Lies, smitten to death,
The bane of Guttorm
To the wolves given over.

Go, look on Sigurd,
On the ways that go southward,
There shalt thou hear
The ernes high screaming,
The ravens a-croaking
As their meat they crave for;
Thou shalt hear the wolves howling
Over thine husband.

How hast thou, Hogni,
The heart to tell me,
Me of joy made empty,
Of such misery?
Thy wretched heart
May the ravens tear
Wide over the world,
With no men mayst thou wend."

One thing Hogni
Had for answer,
Fallen from his high heart,
Full of all trouble:
"More greeting yet,
O Gudrun, for thee,
If my heart the ravens
Should rend asunder!"

Thence I turned
From the talk and the trouble
To go a leasing
What the wolves had left me;
No sigh I made
No smote hands together,
Nor did I wail
As other women
When I sat over
My Sigurd slain.

Night methought it,
And the moonless dark,
When I sat in sorrow
Over Sigurd;
Better than all things
I deemed it would be
If they would let me
Cast my life by,
Or burn me up
As they burn the birch-wood.

From the fell I wandered
Five days together,
Until the high hall
Of Half lay before me;
Seven seasons there
I sat with Thora,
The daughter of Hacon,
Up in Denmark.

My heart to gladden
With gold she wrought
Southland halls
And swans of the Dane-folk;
There had we painted
The chiefs a-playing;
Fair our hands wrought
Folk of the kings.

Red shields we did,
Doughty knights of the Huns,
Hosts spear-dight, hosts helm-dight,
All a high king's fellows;
And the ships of Sigmund
From the land swift sailing;
Heads gilt over
And prowls fair graven.

On the cloth we broidered
That tide of their battling,
Siggeir and Siggarr,
South in Fion.

Then heard Grimhild,
The Queen of Gothland,
How I was abiding,
Weighed down with woe;
And she thrust the cloth from her
And called to her sons,
And oft and eagerly
Asked them thereof,
Who for her son
Would their sister atone,
Who for her lord slain
Would lay down weregild.

Fain was Gunnar
Gold to lay down
All wrongs to atone for,
And Hogni in likewise;
Then she asked who was fain
Of faring straightly,
The steed to saddle
To set forth the wain,
The horse to back,
And the hawk to fly,
To shoot forth the arrow
From out the yew-bow.

Valdarr the Dane-king
Came with Jarisleif
Eymod the third went
Then went Jarizskar;
In kingly wise
In they wended,
The host of the Longbeards;
Red cloaks had they,
Byrnies short-cut,
Helms strong hammered,
Girt with glaives,
And hair red-gleaming.

Each would give me
Gifts desired,
Gifts desired,
Speech dear to my heart,
If they might yet,
Despite my sorrow,
Win back my trust,
But in them nought I trusted.

Then brought me Grimhild
A beaker to drink of,
Cold and bitter,
Wrong's memory to quench;
Made great was that drink
With the might of the earth,
With the death-cold sea
And the blood that Son holdeth.

On that horn's face were there
All the kin of letters
Cut aright and reddened,
How should I rede them rightly?

The ling-fish long
Of the land of Hadding,
Wheat-ears unshorn,
And wild things' inwards.

In that mead were mingled
Many ills together,
Blood of all the wood,
And brown-burnt acorns;
The black dew of the hearth,
And god-doomed dead beasts' inwards

And the swine's liver sodden,
For wrongs late done that deadens.

Then waned my memory
When that was within me,
Of my lord 'mid the hall
By the iron laid low.
Three kings came
Before my knees
Ere she herself
Fell to speech with me.

I will give to thee, Gudrun,
Gold to be glad with,
All the great wealth
Of thy father gone from us,
Rings of red gold
And the great hall of Lodver,
And all fair hangings left
By the king late fallen.

Maids of the Huns
Woven pictures to make,
And work fair in gold
Till thou deem'st thyself glad.
Alone shalt thou rule
O'er the riches of Budli,
Shalt be made great with gold,
And be given to Atli."

Never will I
Wend to a husband,
Or wed the brother
Of Queen Brynhild;
Naught it beseems me
With the son of Budli
Kin to bring forth,
Or to live and be merry."

Nay, the high chiefs
Reward not with hatred,
For take heed that I
Was the first in this tale!
To thy heart shall it be
As if both these had life,
Sigurd and Sigmund,
When thou hast borne sons."

Naught may I, Grimhild,
Seek after gladness,
Nor deem aught hopeful
Of any high warrior,
Since wolf and raven
Were friends together,
The greedy, the cruel,
O'er great Sigurd's heart-blood."

Of all men that can be
For the noblest of kin
This king have I found,
And the foremost of all;
Him shalt thou have
Till with eld thou art heavy—
Be thou ever unwed,
If thou wilt naught of him!"

Nay, nay, bid me not
With thy words long abiding
To take unto me
That balefullest kin;
This king shall bid Gunnar
Be stung to his bane,
And shall cut the heart
From out of Hogni.

Nor shall I leave life
Ere the keen lord,
The eager in sword-play,
My hand shall make end of"

Grimhild a-weeping
Took up the word then,
When the sore bale she wotted
Awaiting her sons,
And the bane hanging over
Her offspring beloved.

I will give thee, moreover,
Great lands, many men,
Wineberg and Valberg,
If thou wilt but have them;
Hold them lifelong,
And live happy, O daughter!"

Then him must I take
From among kingly men,
'Gainst my heart's desire,

From the hands of my kinsfolk;
But no joy I look
To have from that lord:
Scarce may my brother's bane
Be a shield to my sons."

Soon was each warrior
Seen on his horse,
But the Gaulish women
Into wains were gotten;
Then seven days long
O'er a cold land we rode,
And for seven other
Clove we the sea-waves.
But with the third seven
O'er dry land we wended.

There the gate-wardens
Of the burg, high and wide,
Unlooked the barriers
Ere the burg-garth we rode to—
.....

Atli woke me
When meseemed I was
Full evil of heart
For my kin dead slain.

In such wise did the Norns
Wake me or now."—
Fain was he to know
Of this ill foreshowing—
"That methought, O Gudrun,
Giuki's daughter,
That thou setst in my heart
A sword wrought for guile."

For fires tokening I deem it
That dreaming of iron,
But for pride and for lust
The wrath of fair women
Against some bale
Belike, I shall burn thee
For thy solace and healing
Though hateful thou art."

In the fair garth methought
Had saplings fallen
E'en such as I would
Should have waxen ever;
Uprooted were these,
And reddened with blood,
And borne to the bench,
And folk bade me eat of them.

Methought from my hand then
Went hawks a-flying
Lacking their meat
To the land of all ill;
Methought that their hearts
Mingled with honey,
Swollen with blood
I ate amid sorrow.

Lo, next two whelps
From my hands I loosened,
Joyless were both,
And both a-howling;
And now their flesh
Became naught but corpses,
Whereof must I eat
But sore against my will."

O'er the prey of the fishers
Will folk give doom;
From the bright white fish
The heads will they take;
Within a few nights,
Fey as they are,
A little ere day
Of that draught will they eat."

Ne'er since lay I down,
Ne'er since would I sleep,
Hard of heart, in my bed:—
That deed have I to do.

THE SONG OF ATLI.

Gudrun, Giuki's daughter, avenger her brethren, as is told far and wide; first she slew the sons of Atli, and then Atli himself; and she burned the hall thereafter, and all the household with it: and about these matters is this song made:—

In days long gone
Sent Atli to Gunnar
A crafty one riding,
Knefrud men called him;
To Giuki's garth came he,
To the hall of Gunnar,
To the benches gay-dight,
And the gladsome drinking.

There drank the great folk
'Mid the guileful one's silence,
Drank wine in their fair hall:
The Huns' wrath they feared
When Knefrud cried
In his cold voice,
As he sat on the high seat,
That man of the Southland:

Atli has sent me
Riding swift on his errands
On the bit-gripping steed
Through dark woodways unbeaten,
To bid thee, King Gunnar,
Come to his fair bench
With helm well-adorned,
To the house of King Atli.

Shield shall ye have there
And spears ashen-shafted,
Helms ruddy with gold,
And hosts of the Huns;
Saddle-gear silver gilt,
Shirts red as blood,
The hedge of the warwife,
And horses bit-gripping.

And he saith he will give you
Gnitaheath widespread,
And whistling spears
And prowess well-gilded,
Might wealth
With the stead of Danpi,
And that noble wood
Men name the Murkwood."

Then Gunnar turned head
And spake unto Hogni:
"What rede from thee, high one,
Since such things we hear?
No gold know I
On Gnitaheath,
That we for our parts
Have not portion as great.

Seven halls we have
Fulfilled of swords,
And hilts of gold
Each sword there has;
My horse is the best,
My blade is the keenest;
Fair my bow o'er the bench is,
Gleams my byrny with gold;
Brightest helm, brightest shield,
From Kiar's dwelling ere brought—
Better all things I have
Than all things of the Huns."

HOGNI SAID:
"What mind has our sister
That a ring she hath sent us
In weed of wolves clad?
Bids she not to be wary?
For a wolf's hair I found
The fair ring wreathed about;
Wolf beset shall the way be
If we wend on this errand."

No sons whetted Gunnar,
Nor none of his kin,
Nor learned men nor wise men,
Nor such as were mighty.
Then spake Gunnar
E'en as a king should speak,
Glorious in mead-hall
From great heart and high:

Rise up now, Fiornir,
Forth down the benches
Let the gold-cups of great ones
Pass in hands of my good-men!
Well shall we drink wine,
Draughts dear to our hearts,
Though the last of all feasts
In our fair house this be!

For the wolves shall rule
O'er the wealth of the Niblungs,

With the pine-woods' wardens
In Gunnar perish:
And the black-felled bears
With fierce teeth shall bite
For the glee of the dog kind,
If again comes not Gunnar."

Then good men never shamed,
Greeting aloud,
Led the great king of men
From the garth of his home;
And cried the fair son
Of Hogni the king:
"Fare happy, O Lords,
Whereso your hearts lead you!"

Then the bold knights
Let their bit-gripping steeds
Wend swift o'er the fells,
Tread the murk-wood unknown,
All the Hunwood was shaking
As the hardy ones fared there;
O'er the green meads they urged
Their steeds shy of the goad.

Then Atli's land saw they;
Great towers and strong,
And the bold men of Bikki,
Aloft on the burg:
The Southland folks' hall
Set with benches about,
Dight with bucklers well bounden,
And bright white shining shields.

There drank Atli,
The awful Hun king,
Wine in his fair hall;
Without were the warders,
Gunnar's folk to have heed of,
Lest they had fared thither
With the whistling spear
War to wake 'gainst the king.

But first came their sister
As they came to the hall,
Both her brethren she met,
With beer little gladdened:
"Bewrayed art thou, Gunnar!
What dost thou great king
To deal war to the Huns?
Go thou swift from the hall!"

Better, brother, hadst thou
Fared here in thy byrny
Than with helm gaily dight
Looked on Atli's great house:
Them hadst sat then in saddle
Through days bright with the sun
Fight to awaken
And fair fields to redden:

O'er the folk fate makes pale
Should the Norn's tears have fallen,
The shield mays of the Huns
Should have known of all sorrow;
And King Atli himself
To worm-close should be brought;
But now is the worm-close
Kept but for thee."

Then spake Gunnar
Great 'mid the people:
"Over-late sister
The Niblungs to summon;
A long way to seek
The helping of warriors,
The high lord unshamed,
From the hills of the Rhine!"

.....

Seven Hogni beat down
With his sword sharp-grinded,
And the eighth man he thrust
Amidst of the fire.
Ever so shall famed warrior
Fight with his foemen,
As Hogni fought
For the hand of Gunnar.

But on Gunnar they fell,
And set him in fetters,
And bound hard and fast
That friend of Burgundians;
Then the warrior they asked
If he would buy life,
But life with gold
That king of the Goths.

Nobly spake Gunnar,
Great lord of the Niblungs;
"Hogni's bleeding heart first
Shall lie in mine hand,
Cut from the breast
Of the bold-riding lord,
With bitter-sharp knife
From the son of the king."

With guile the great one
Would they beguile,
On the wailing thrall
Laid they hand unwares,
And cut the heart
From out of Hjalli,
Laid it bleeding on trencher
And bare it to Gunnar.

Here have I the heart
Of Hjalli the trembler,
Little like the heart
Of Hogni the hardy:
As much as it trembleth
Laid on the trencher
By the half more it trembled
In the breast of him hidden."

Then laughed Hogni
When they cut the heart from him,
From the crest-smith yet quick,
Little thought he to quail.
The hard acorn of thought
From the high king they took,
Laid it bleeding on trencher
And bare it Gunnar.

Here have I the heart
Of Hogni the hardy,
Little like to the heart
Of Hjalli the trembler.
Howso little it quaketh
Laid here on the dish,
Yet far less it quaked
In the breast of him laid.

So far mayst thou bide
From men's eyen, O Atli,
As from that treasure
Thou shalt abide!

Behold in my heart
Is hidden for ever
That hoard of the Niblungs,
Now Hogni is dead.
Doubt threw me two ways
While the twain of us lived,
But all that is gone
Now I live on alone.

The great Rhine shall rule
O'er the hate-raising treasure,
That gold of the Niblungs,
The seed of the gods:
In the weltering water
Shall that wealth lie a-gleaming,
Or it shine on the hands
Of the children of Huns!"

Then cried Atli,
King of the Hun-folk,
"Drive forth your wains now
The slave is fast bounden."
And straightly thence
The bit-shaking steeds
Drew the hoard-warden,
The war-god to his death.

Atli the great king,
Rode upon Glaum,
With shields set round about,
And sharp thorns of battle:
Gudrun, bound by wedlock
To these, victory made gods of,
Held back her tears
As the hall she ran into.

Let it fare with thee, Atli,
E'en after thine oaths sworn
To Gunnar fell often;
Yea, oaths sworn of old time,
By the sun sloping southward,
By the high burg of Sigry,
By the fair bed of rest,
By the red ring of Ull!"

Now a host of men
Cast the high king alive

Into a close
Crept o'er within
With most foul worms,
Fulfilled of all venom,
Ready grave to dig
In his doughty heart.

Wrathful-hearted he smote
The harp with his hand,
Gunnar laid there alone;
And loud rang the strings.—
In such wise ever
Should hardy ring-scatterer
Keep gold from all folk
In the garth of his foeman.

Then Atli would wend
About his wide land,
On his steed brazen shod,
Back from the murder.
Din there was in the garth,
All thronged with the horses;
High the weapon-song rose
From men come from the heath.

Out then went Gudrun,
'Gainst Atli returning,
With a cup gilded over,
To greet the land's ruler;
"Come, then, and take it,
King glad in thine hall,
From Gudrun's hands,
For the hell-farers groan not!"

Clashed the beakers of Atli,
Wine-laden on bench,
As in hall there a-gathered,
The Huns fell a-talking,
And the long-bearded eager ones
Entered therein,
From a murk den new-come,
From the murder of Gunnar.

Then hastened the sweet-faced
Delight of the shield-folk,
Bright in the fair hall,
Wine to bear to them:
The dreadful woman
Gave dainties withal
To the lords pale with fate,
Laid strange word upon Atli:

The hearts of thy sons
Hast thou eaten, sword-dealer,
All bloody with death
And drenched with honey:
In most heavy mood
Brood o'er venison of men!
Drink rich draughts therewith,
Down the high benches send it!

Never callest thou now
From henceforth to thy knee
Fair Erp or fair Eiril,
Bright-faced with the drink;
Never seest thou them now
Amidmost the seat,
Scattering the gold,
Or shafting of spears;
Manes trimming duly,
Or driving steeds forth!"

Din arose from the benches,
Dread song of men was there,
Noise 'mid the fair hangings,
As all Hun's children wept;
All saving Gudrun,
Who never gat greeting,
For her brethren bear-hardy
For her sweet sons and bright,
The young ones, the simple
Once gotten with Atli.

.....

The seed of gold
Sowed the swan-bright woman,
Rings of red gold
She gave to the house-carls;
Fate let she wax,
Let the bright gold flow forth,
In naught spared that woman
The store-houses' wealth.

Atli unaware
Was a-weary with drink;
No weapon had he,

No heeding of Gudrun—
Ah, the pity would be better,
When in soft wise they twain
Would full often embrace
Before the great lords!

To the bed with sword-point
Blood gave she to drink
With a hand fain of death,
And she let the dogs loose:
Then in from the hall-door—
—Up waked the house-carls—
Hot brands she cast,
Gat revenge for her brethren.

To the flame gave she all
Who therein might be found;
Fell adown the old timbers,
Reeked all treasure-houses;
There the shield-mays were burnt,
Their lives' span brought to naught;
In the fierce fire sank down
All the stead of the Budlungs.

Wide told of is this—
Ne'er sithence in the world,
Thus fared bride clad in byrny
For her brothers' avenging;
For behold, this fair woman
To three kings of the people,
Hath brought very death
Or ever she died!

THE WHETTING OF GUDRUN.

Gudrun went down unto the sea whenas she had slain Atli, and she cast herself therein, for she was fain to end her life: but nowise might she drown. She drave over the firths to the land of King Jonakr, and he wedded her, and their sons were Sorli, and Erp, and Hamdir, and there was Swanhild, Sigurd's daughter, nourished: and she was given to Jormunrek the Mighty. Now Bikki was a man of his, and gave such counsel to Randver, the king's son, as that he should take her; and with that counsel were the young folk well content.

Then Bikki told the king, and the king let hang Randver, but bade Swanhild be trodden under horses' feet. But when Gudrun heard thereof, she spake to her sons—

Words of strife heard I,
Huger than any,
Woeful words spoken,
Sprung from all sorrow,
When Gudrun fierce-hearted
With the grimmest of words
Whetter her sons
Unto the slaying.

Why are ye sitting here?
Why sleep ye life away?
Why doth it grieve you nought?
Glad words to speak,
Now when your sister—
Young of years was she—
Has Jormunrek trodden
With the treading of horses?—

Black horses and white
In the highway of warriors;
Grey horses that know
The roads of the Goths.—

Little like are ye grown
To that Gunnar of old days!
Nought are your hearts
As the heart of Hogni!
Well would ye seek
Vengeance to win
If your mood were in aught
As the mood of my brethren,
Or the hardy hearts
Of the Kings of the Huns!"

Then spake Hamdir,
The high-hearted—
"Little didst thou
Praise Hogni's doings,
When Sigurd woke
From out of sleep,
And the blue-white bed-gear
Upon thy bed
Grew red with man's blood—
With the blood of thy mate!

Too baleful vengeance
Wroughtest thou for thy brethren
Most sore and evil
When thy sons thou slewdest,
Else all we together
On Jormunrek
Had wrought sore vengeance
For that our sister.

Come, bring forth quickly
The Hun kings' bright gear,
Since thou has urged us
Unto the sword-Thing!"

Laughing went Gudrun
To the bower of good gear,
Kings' crested helms
From chests she drew,
And wide-wrought byrnies
Bore to her sons:
Then on their horses
Load laid the heroes.

Then spake Hamdir,
The high-hearted—
"Never cometh again
His mother to see
The spear-god laid low
In the land of the Goths.
That one arvel mayst thou
For all of us drink,
For sister Swanhild,
And us thy sons."

Greeted Gudrun
Giuki's daughter;
Sorrowing she went
In the forecourt to sit,
That she might tell,
With cheeks tear-furrowed,
Her weary wail
In many a wise.

Three fires I knew,
Three hearths I knew,
To three husbands' houses
Have I been carried;
And better than all
Had been Sigurd alone,
He whom my brethren
Brought to his bane.

Such sore grief as that
Methought never should be,
Yet more indeed
Was left for my torment
Then, when the great ones
Gave me to Atli.

My fair bright boys
I bade unto speech,
Nor yet might I win
Weregild for my bale,
Ere I had hewn off
Those Niblungs' heads.

To the sea-strand I went
With the Norns sorely wroth,
For I would thrust from me
The storm of their torment;
But the high billows
Would not drown, but bore me
Forth, till I stepped a-land
Longer to live.

Then I went a-bed—
—Ah, better in the old days,
This was the third time!—
To a king of the people;
Offspring I brought forth,
Props of a fair house,
Props of a fair house,
Jonakr's fair sons.

But around Swanhild
Bond-maidens sat,
Her, that of all mine
Most to my heart was;
Such was my Swanhild,
In my hall's midmost,
As is the sunbeam
Fair to behold.

In gold I arrayed her,
And goodly raiment,
Or ever I gave her
To the folk of the Goths.

That was the hardest
Of my heavy woes,
When the bright hair,—
O the bright hair of Swanhild!—
In the mire was trodden
By the treading of horses.

This was the sorest,
When my love, my Sigurd,
Reft of glory
In his bed gat ending:
But this the grimpest
When glittering worms
Tore their way
Through the heart of Gunnar.

But this the keenest
When they cut to the quick
Of the hardy heart
Of the unfear'd Hogni.
Of much of bale I mind me,
Of many griefs I mind me;
Why should I sit abiding
Yet more bale and more?

Thy coal-black horse,
O Sigurd, bridle,
The swift on the highway!
O let him speed hither!
Here sitteth no longer
Son or daughter,
More good gifts
To give to Gudrun!

Mindst thou not, Sigurd,
Of the speech betwixt us,
When on one bed
We both sat together,
O my great king—
That thou wouldst come to me
E'en from the hall of Hell,
I to thee from the fair earth?

Pile high, O earls
The oaken pile,
Let it be the highest
That ever queen had!
Let the fire burn swift,
My breast with woe laden,
And thaw all my heart,
Hard, heavy with sorrow!"

Now may all earls
Be bettered in mind,
May the grief of all maidens
Ever be minished,
For this tale of sorrow
So told to its ending.

THE LAY OF HAMDIR

Great deeds of bale
In the garth began,
At the sad dawning
The tide of Elves' sorrow
When day is a-waxing
And man's grief awaketh,
And the sorrow of each one
The early day quickeneth.

Not now, not now,
Nor yesterday,
But long ago
Has that day worn by,
That ancientest time,
The first time to tell of,
Then, whenas Gudrun,
Born of Giuki,
Whetter her sons
To Swanhild's avenging.

Your sister's name
Was naught but Swanhild,
Whom Jormunrek
With horses has trodden!—
White horses and black
On the war-beaten way,
Grey horses that go
On the roads of the Goths.

All alone am I now
As in holt is the aspen;
As the fir-tree of boughs,
So of kin am I bare;
As bare of things longed for
As the willow of leaves

When the bough-breaking wind
The warm day endeth.

Few, sad, are ye left
O kings of my folk!
Yet alone living
Last shreds of my kin!

Ah, naught are ye grown
As that Gunnar of old days;
Naught are your hearts
As the heart of Hogni!
Well would ye seek
Vengeance to win
If your hearts were in aught
As the hearts of my brethren!"

Then spake Hamdir
The high-hearted:
"Nought hadst thou to praise
The doings of Hogni,
When they woke up Sigurd
From out of slumber,
And in bed thou sat'st up
'Mid the banes-men's laughter.

Then when thy bed=gear,
Blue-white, well woven
By art of craftsmen
All swam with thy king's blood;
The Sigurd died,
O'er his dead corpse thou statest,
Not heeding aught gladsome,
Since Gunnar so willed it.

Great grief for Atli
Gatst thou by Erp's murder,
And the end of thine Eitil,
But worse grief for thyself.
Good to use sword
For the slaying of others
In such wise that its edge
Shall not turn on ourselves!"

Then well spake Sorli
From a heart full of wisdom:
"No words will I
Make with my mother,
Though both ye twain
Need words belike—
What askest thou, Gudrun,
To let thee go greeting?

Weep for thy brethren,
Weep for thy sweet sons,
And thy highest kinsfolk
Laid by the fight-side!
Yea, and thou Gudrun,
May'st greet for us twain
Sitting fey on our steeds
Doomed in far lands to die."

From the garth forth they went
With hearts full of fury,
Sorli and Hamdir,
The sons of Gudrun,
And they met on the way
The wise in all wiles:
"And thou little Erp,
What helping from thee?"

He of alien womb
Spake out in such wise:
"Good help for my kin,
Such as foot gives to foot,
Or flesh-covered hand
Gives unto hand!"

What helping for foot
That help that foot giveth,
Or for flesh-covered hand
The helping of hand?"

Then spake Erp
Yet once again
Mock spake the prince
As he sat on his steed:
"Fool's deed to show
The way to a dastard!"
"Bold beyond measure,"
Quoth they, "is the base-born!"

Out from the sheath
Drew they the sheath-steel,
And the glaives' edges played
For the pleasure of hell,
By the third part they minished

The might that they had,
Their young kin they let lie
A-cold on the earth.

Then their fur-cloaks they shook
And bound fast their swords,
In webs goodly woven
Those great ones were clad;
Young they went o'er the fells
Where the dew was new-fallen
Swift, on steeds of the Huns,
Heavy vengeance to wreak.

Forth stretched the ways,
And an ill way they found,
Yea, their sister's son
Hanging slain upon tree—
Wolf-trees by the wind made cold
At the town's westward
Loud with cranes' clatter—
Ill abiding there long!

Din in the king's hall
Of men merry with drink,
And none might hearken
The horses' tramping
Or ever the warders
Their great horn winded.

Then men went forth
To Jormunrek
To tell of the heeding
Of men under helm:
"Give ye good counsel!
Great ones are come hither,
For the wrong of men mighty
Was the may to death trodden."

Loud Jormunrek laughed,
And laid hand to his beard,
Nor bade bring his byrny,
But with the wine fighting,
Shook his red locks,
On his white shield sat staring,
And in his hand
Swung the gold cup on high.

Sweet sight for me
Those twain to set eyes on,
Sorli and Hamdir,
Here in my hall!
Then with bowstrings
Would I bind them,
And hang the good Giukings
Aloft on the gallows!"

.....

Then spake Hrothglod
From off the high steps,
Spake the slim-fingered
Unto her son,—
—For a threat was cast forth
Of what ne'er should fall—
"Shall two men alone
Two hundred Gothfolk
Bind or bear down
In the midst of their burg?"

.....

Strife and din in the hall,
Cups smitten asunder
Men lay low in blood
From the breasts of Goths flowing.

Then spake Hamdir,
The high-hearted:
"Thou cravedst, O king,
From the coming of us,
The sons of one mother,
Amidmost thine hall—
Look on these hands of thine,
Look on these feet of thine,
Cast by us, Jormunrek,
On to the flame!"

Then cried aloud
The high Gods' kinsman
Bold under byrny,—
Roared he as bears roar;
"Stones to the stout ones
That the spears bite not,
Nor the edges of steel,
These sons of Jonakr!"

.....

QUOTH SORLI:
"Bale, brother, wroughtst thou

By that bag's opening,
Oft from that bag
Rede of bale cometh!
Heart hast thou, Hamdir,
If thou hadst heart's wisdom
Great lack in a man
Who lacks wisdom and lore!"

HAMDIR SAID:
"Yes, off were the head
If Erp were alive yet,
Our brother the bold
Whom we slew by the way;
The far-famed through the world—
Ah, the fares drave me on,
And the man war made holy,
There must I slay!"

SORLI SAID:
"Unmeet we should do
As the doings of wolves are,
Raising wrong each 'gainst other
As the dogs of the Norns,
The greedy ones nourished
In waste steads of the world.

In strong wise have we fought,
On Goths' corpses we stand,
Beat down by our edges,
E'en as erns on the bough.
Great fame our might winneth,
Die we now, or to-morrow,—
No man lives till eve
Whom the fates doom at morning."
At the hall's gable-end
Fell Sorli to earth,
But Hamdir lay low
At the back of the houses.

Now this is called the Ancient Lay of Hamdir.

THE LAMENT OF ODDRUN.

There was a king hight Heidrik, and his daughter was called Borgny, and the name of her lover was Vilmund. Now she might nowise be made lighter of a child she travailed with, before Oddrun, Atil's sister, came to her,—she who had been the love of Gunnar, Giuki's son. But of their speech together has this been sung:

I have hear tell
In ancient tales
How a may there came
To Morna-land,
Because no man
On mould abiding
For Heidrik's daughter
Might win healing.

All that heard Oddrun,
Atil's sister,
How that the damsel
Had heavy sickness,
So she led from stall
Her bridled steed,
And on the swart one
Laid the saddle.

She made her horse wend
O'er smooth ways of earth,
Until to a high-built
Hall she came;
Then the saddle she had
From the hungry horse,
And her ways wended
In along the wide hall,
And this word first
Spake forth therewith:

What is most famed,
Afield in Hunland,
Or what may be
Blithest in Hunland?"

QUOTH THE HANDMAID:
"Here lieth Borgny,
Borne down by trouble,
Thy sweet friend, O Oddrun,
See to her helping!"

ODDRUN SAID:
"Who of the lords
Hath laid this grief on her,
Why is the anguish
Of Borgny so weary?"

THE HANDMAID SAID:

"He is hight Vilmund,
Friend of hawk-bearers,
He wrapped the damsel
In the warm bed-gear
Five winters long
Without her father's wotting."

No more than this
They spake methinks;
Kind sat she down
By the damsel's knee;
Mightily sand Oddrun,
Sharp piercing songs
By Borgny's side:

Till a maid and a boy
Might tread on the world's ways,
Blithe babes and sweet
Of Hogni's bane:
Then the damsel forewearing
The word took up,
The first word of all
That had won from her:

So may help thee
All helpful things,
Fey and Freyia,
And all the fair Gods,
As thou hast thrust
This torment from me!"

ODDRUN SAID:

"Yet no heart had I
For thy helping,
Since never wert thou
Worthy of helping,
But my word I held to,
That of old was spoken
When the high lords
Dealt out the heritage,
That every soul
I would ever help."

BORGNY SAID:

"Right mad art thou, Oddrun,
And reft of thy wits,
Whereas thou speakest
Hard words to me
Thy fellow ever
Upon the earth
As of brothers twain,
We had been born."

ODDRUN SAID:

"Well I mind me yet,
What thou saidst that evening,
Whenas I bore forth
Fair drink for Gunnar;
Such a thing, saidst thou,
Should fall out never,
For any may
Save for me alone."

Mind had the damsel
Of the weary day
Whenas the high lords
Dealt out the heritage,
And she sat her down,
The sorrowful woman,
To tell of the bale,
And the heavy trouble.

Nourished was I
In the hall of kings—
Most folk were glad—
'Mid the council of great ones:
In fair life lived I,
And the wealth of my father
For five winters only,
While yet he had life.

Such were the last words
That ever he spake,
The king forewearing,
Ere his ways he went;
For he bade folk give me
The gold red-gleaming,
And give me in Southlands
To the son of Grimhild.

But Brynhild he bade
To the helm to betake her,
And said that Death-chooser
She should become;
And that no better
Might ever be born

Into the world,
If fate would not spoil it.

Brynhild in bower
Sewed at her broidery,
Folk she had
And fair lands about her;
Earth lay a-sleeping,
Slept the heavens aloft
When Fafnir's-bane
The burg first saw.

Then was war waged
With the Welsh-wrought sword
And the burg all broken
That Brynhild owned;
Nor wore long space,
E'en as well might be,
Ere all those wiles
Full well she knew.

Hard and dreadful
Was the vengeance she drew down,
So that all we
Have woe enow.
Through all lands of the world
Shall that story fare forth
How she did her to death
For the death of Sigurd.

But therewithal Gunnar
The gold-scatterer
Did I fall to loving
And should have loved him.
Rings of red gold
Would they give to Atli,
Would give to my brother
Things goodly and great.

Yea, fifteen steeds
Would they give for me,
And the load of Grani
To have as a gift;
But then spake Atli,
That such was his will,
Never gift to take
From the sons of Giuki.

But we in nowise
Might love withstand,
And mine head must I lay
On my love, the ring-breaker;
And many there were
Among my kin,
Who said that they
Had seen us together.

Then Atli said
That I surely never
Would fall to crime
Or shameful folly:
But now let no one
For any other,
That shame deny
Where love has dealing.

For Atli sent
His serving-folk
Wide through the murkwood
Proof to win of me,
And thither they came
Where they ne'er should have come,
Where one bed we twain
Had dight betwixt us.

To those men had we given
Rings of red gold,
Naught to tell
Thereof to Atli,
But straight they hastened
Home to the house,
And all the tale
To Atli told.

'Whereas from Gudrun
Well they hid it,
Though better by half
Had she have known it.

.....

Din was there to hear
Of the hoofs gold-shod,
When into the garth
Rode the sons of Giuki.

There from Hogni
The heart they cut,

But into the worm-close
Cast the other.
There the king, the wise-hearted,
Swept his harp-strings,
For the might king
Had ever mind
That I to his helping
Soon should come.

But now was I gone
Yet once again
Unto Geirmund,
Good feast to make;
Yet had I hearing,
E'en out from Hlesey,
How of sore trouble
The harp-strings sang.

So I bade the bondmaids
Be ready swiftly,
For I listed to save
The life of the king,
And we let our ship
Swim over the sound,
Till Atli's dwelling
We saw all clearly.

Then came the wretch
Crawling out,
E'en Atli's mother,
All sorrow upon her!
A grave gat her sting
In the heart of Gunnar,
So that no helping
Was left for my hero.

O gold-clad woman,
Full oft I wonder
How I my life
Still hold thereafter,
For methought I loved
That light in battle,
The swift with the sword,
As my very self.

Thou hast sat and hearkened
As I have told thee
Of many an ill-fate,
Mine and theirs—
Each man liveth
E'en as he may live—
Now hath gone forth
The greeting of Oddrun.

Njáls Saga

CHAPTER I. OF FIDDLE MORD.

There was a man named Mord whose surname was Fiddle; he was the son of Sigvat the Red, and he dwelt at the "Vale" in the Rangrивales. He was a mighty chief, and a great taker up of suits, and so great a lawyer that no judgments were thought lawful unless he had a hand in them. He had an only daughter, named Unna. She was a fair, courteous and gifted woman, and that was thought the best match in all the Rangrивales.

Now the story turns westward to the Broadfirth dales, where, at Hauskuldstede, in Laxriverdale, dwelt a man named Hauskuld, who was Dalakoll's son, and his mother's name was Thorgerda. He had a brother named Hrut, who dwelt at Hrutstede; he was of the same mother as Hauskuld, but his father's name was Heriolff. Hrut was handsome, tall and strong, well skilled in arms, and mild of temper; he was one of the wisest of men—stern towards his foes, but a good counsellor on great matters. It happened once that Hauskuld bade his friends to a feast, and his brother Hrut was there, and sat next him. Hauskuld had a daughter named Hallgerda, who was playing on the floor with some other girls. She was fair of face and tall of growth, and her hair was as soft as silk; it was so long, too, that it came down to her waist. Hauskuld called out to her, "Come hither to me, daughter." So she went up to him, and he took her by the chin, and kissed her; and after that she went away.

Then Hauskuld said to Hrut, "What dost thou think of this maiden? Is she not fair?" Hrut held his peace. Hauskuld said the same thing to him a second time, and then Hrut answered, "Fair enough is this maid, and many will smart for it, but this I know not, whence thief's eyes have come into our race." Then Hauskuld was wroth, and for a time the brothers saw little of each other.

CHAPTER II. HRUT WOOS UNNA.

It happened once that those brothers, Hauskuld and Hrut, rode to the Althing, and there was much people at it. Then Hauskuld said to Hrut, "One thing I wish, brother, and that is, that thou wouldst better thy lot and woo thyself a wife."

Hrut answered, "That has been long on my mind, though there always seemed to be two sides to the matter; but now I will do as thou wishest; whither shall we turn our eyes?"

Hauskuld answered, "Here now are many chiefs at the Thing, and there is plenty of choice, but I have already set my eyes on a spot where a match lies made to thy hand. The woman's name is Unna, and she is a daughter of Fiddle Mord one of the wisest of men. He is here at the Thing, and his daughter too, and thou mayest see her if it pleases thee."

Now the next day, when men were going to the High Court, they saw some well-dressed women standing outside the booths of the men from the Rangrивales, Then Hauskuld said to Hrut—

"Yonder now is Unna, of whom I spoke; what thinkest thou of her?"

"Well," answered Hrut; "but yet I do not know whether we should get on well together."

After that they went to the High Court, where Fiddle Mord was laying down the law as was his wont, and alter he had done he went home to his booth.

Then Hauskuld and Hrut rose, and went to Mord's booth. They went in and found Mord sitting in the innermost part of the booth,

and they bade him "good day." He rose to meet them, and took Hauskuld by the hand and made him sit down by his side, and Hrut sat next to Hauskuld. So after they had talked much of this and that, at last Hauskuld said, "I have a bargain to speak to thee about; Hrut wishes to become thy son-in-law, and buy thy daughter, and I, for my part, will not be sparing in the matter."

Mord answered, "I know that thou art a great chief, but thy brother is unknown to me."

"He is a better man than I," answered Hauskuld.

"Thou wilt need to lay down a large sum with him, for she is heir to all I leave behind me," said Mord.

"There is no need," said Hauskuld, "to wait long before thou hearest what I give my word he shall have. He shall have Kamness and Hrutstede, up as far as Thrangargil, and a trading-ship beside, now on her voyage."

Then said Hrut to Mord, "Bear in mind, now, husband, that my brother has praised me much more than I deserve for love's sake; but if after what thou hast heard, thou wilt make the match, I am willing to let thee lay down the terms thyself."

Mord answered, "I have thought over the terms; she shall have sixty hundreds down, and this sum shall be increased by a third more in thine house, but if ye two have heirs, ye shall go halves in the goods."

Then said Hrut, "I agree to these terms, and now let us take witness." After that they stood up and shook hands, and Mord betrothed his daughter Unna to Hrut, and the bridal feast was to be at Mord's house, half a month after Midsummer.

Now both sides ride home from the Thing, and Hauskuld and Hrut ride westward by Hallbjorn's beacon. Then Thiostolf, the son of Biorn Gullbera of Reykiardale, rode to meet them, and told them how a ship had come out from Norway to the White River, and how aboard of her was Auzur, Hrut's father's brother, and he wished Hrut to come to him as soon as ever he could. When Hrut heard this, he asked Hauskuld to go with him to the ship, so Hauskuld went with his brother, and when they reached the ship, Hrut gave his kinsman Auzur a kind and hearty welcome. Auzur asked them into his booth to drink, so their horses were unsaddled, and they went in and drank, and while they were drinking, Hrut said to Auzur, "Now, kinsman, thou must ride west with me, and stay with me this winter."

"That cannot be, kinsman, for I have to tell thee the death of thy brother Eyvind, and he has left thee his heir at the Gula Thing, and now thy foes will seize thy heritage, unless thou comest to claim it."

"What's to be done now, brother?" said Hrut to Hauskuld, "for this seems a hard matter, coming just as I have fixed my bridal day."

"Thou must ride south," said Hauskuld, "and see Mord, and ask him to change the bargain which ye two have made, and to let his daughter sit for thee three winters as thy betrothed, but I will ride home and bring down thy wares to the ship."

Then said Hrut, "My wish is that thou shouldst take meal and timber, and whatever else thou needest out of the lading." So Hrut had his horses brought out, and he rode south, while Hauskuld rode home west. Hrut came east to the Rangrивales to Mord, and had a good welcome, and he told Mord all his business, and asked his advice what he should do.

"How much money is this heritage?" asked Mord, and Hrut said it would come to a hundred marks, if he got it all.

"Well," said Mord, "that is much when set against what I shall leave behind me, and thou shalt go for it, if thou wilt."

After that they broke their bargain, and Unna was to sit waiting for Hrut three years as his betrothed. Now Hrut rides back to the ship, and stays by her during the summer, till she was ready to sail, and Hauskuld brought down all Hrut's wares and money to the ship, and Hrut placed all his other property in Hauskuld's hands to keep for him while he was away. Then Hauskuld rode home to his house, and a little while after they got a fair wind and sail away to sea. They were out three weeks, and the first land they made was Hern, near Bergen, and so sail eastward to the Bay.

CHAPTER III. HRUT AND GUNNHILDA, KINGS MOTHER.

At that time Harold Grayfell reigned in Norway; he was the son of Eric Bloodaxe, who was the son of Harold Fairhair; his mother's name was Gunnhilda, a daughter of Auzur Toti, and they had their abode east, at the King's Crag. Now the news was spread, how a ship had come thither east into the Bay, and as soon as Gunnhilda heard of it, she asked what men from Iceland were aboard, and they told her Hrut was the man's name, Auzur's brother's son. Then Gunnhilda said, "I see plainly that he means to claim his heritage, but there is a man named Soti, who has laid his hands on it."

After that she called her waiting-man, whose name was Augmund, and said—

"I am going to send thee to the Bay to find out Auzur and Hint, and tell them that I ask them both to spend this winter with me. Say, too, that I will be their friend, and if Hrut will carry out my counsel, I will see after his suit, and anything else he takes in hand, and I will speak a good word, too, for him to the king."

After that he set off and found them; and as soon as they knew that he was Gunnhilda's servant, they gave him good welcome. He took them aside and told them his errand, and after that they talked over their plans by themselves. Then Auzur said to Hrut—

"Methinks, kinsman, here is little need for long talk, our plans are ready made for us; for I know Gunnhilda's temper; as soon as ever we say we will not go to her she will drive us out of the land, and take all our goods by force; but if we go to her, then she will do us such honour as she has promised."

Augmund went home, and when he saw Gunnhilda, he told her how his errand had ended, and that they would come, and Gunnhilda said—

"It is only what was to be looked for; for Hrut is said to be a wise and well-bred man; and now do thou keep a sharp look out, and tell me as soon as ever they come to the town."

Hrut and Auzur went east to the King's Crag, and when they reached the town, their kinsmen and friends went out to meet and welcome them. They asked, whether the king were in the town, and they told them he was. After that they met Augmund, and he brought them a greeting from Gunnhilda, saying, that she could not ask them to her house before they had seen the king, lest men should say, "I make too much of them." Still she would do all she could for them, and she went on, "tell Hrut to be outspoken before the king, and to ask to be made one of his body-guard"; "and here," said Augmund, "is a dress of honour which she sends to thee, Hrut, and in it thou must go in before the king." After that he went away.

The next day Hrut said—

"Let us go before the king."

"That may well be," answered Auzur.

So they went, twelve of them together, and all of them friends or kinsmen, and came into the hall where the king sat over his drink. Hrut went first and bade the king "good day," and the king, looking steadfastly at the man who was well-dressed, asked him his name. So he told him his name.

"Art thou an Icelander?" said the king.

He answered, "Yes."

"What drove thee hither to seek us?"

Then Hrut answered—

"To see your state, lord; and, besides, because I have a great matter of inheritance here in the land, and I shall have need of your help, if I am to get my rights."

The king said—

"I have given my word that every man shall have lawful justice here in Norway; but hast thou any other errand in seeking me?"

"Lord!" said Hrut, "I wish you to let me live in your court, and become one of your men."

At this the king holds his peace, but Gunnhilda said—

"It seems to me as if this man offered you the greatest honour, for me thinks if there were many such men in the body-guard, it would be well filled."

"Is he a wise man?" asked the king.

"He is both wise and willing," said she.

"Well," said the king, "methinks my mother wishes that thou shouldst have the rank for which thou askest, but for the sake of our honour and the custom of the land, come to me in half a month's time, and then thou shalt be made one of my body-guard. Meantime, my mother will take care of thee, but then come to me."

Then Gunnhilda said to Augmund—

"Follow them to my house, and treat them well."

So Augmund went out, and they went with him, and he brought them to a hall built of stone, which was hung with the most beautiful tapestry, and there too was Gunnhilda's high-seat.

Then Augmund said to Hrut—

"Now will be proved the truth of all that I said to thee from Gunnhilda. Here is her high-seat, and in it thou shalt sit, and this seat thou shalt hold, though she comes herself into the hall."

After that he made them good cheer, and they had sat down but a little while when Gunnhilda came in. Hrut wished to jump up and greet her.

"Keep thy seat!" she says, "and keep it too all the time thou art my guest."

Then she sat herself down by Hrut, and they fell to drink, and at even she said—

"Thou shalt be in the upper chamber with me to-night, and we two together."

"You shall have your way," he answers.

After that they went to sleep, and she locked the door inside. So they slept that night, and in the morning fell to drinking again. Thus they spent their life all that half-month, and Gunnhilda said to the men who were there—

"Ye shall lose nothing except your lives if you say to any one a word of how Hrut and I are going on."

[When the half-month was over] Hrut gave her a hundred ells of household woollen and twelve rough cloaks, and Gunnhilda thanked him for his gifts. Then Hrut thanked her and gave her a kiss and went away. She bade him "farewell." And next day he went before the king with thirty men after him and bade the king "good-day." The king said—

"Now, Hrut, thou wilt wish me to carry out towards thee what I promised."

So Hrut was made one of the king's body-guard, and he asked, "Where shall I sit?"

"My mother shall settle that," said the king.

Then she got him a seat in the highest room, and he spent the winter with the king in much honour.

CHAPTER IV. OF HRUT'S CRUISE.

When the spring came he asked about Soti, and found out he had gone south to Denmark with the inheritance. Then Hrut went to Gunnhilda and tells her what Soti had been about. Gunnhilda said—

"I will give thee two long-ships, full manned, and along with them the bravest men. Wolf the Unwashed, our overseer of guests; but still go and see the king before thou settest off."

Hrut did so; and when he came before the king, then he told the king of Soti's doings, and how he had a mind to hold on after him.

The king said, "What strength has my mother handed over to thee?"

"Two long-ships and Wolf the Unwashed to lead the men," says Hrut.

"Well given," says the king. "Now I will give thee other two ships, and even then thou'lt need all the strength thou'st got."

After that he went down with Hrut to the ship, and said "fare thee well." Then Hrut sailed away south with his crews.

CHAPTER V. ATLI ARNVID SON'S SLAYING.

There was a man named Atli, son of Arnvid, Earl of East Gothland. He had kept back the taxes from Hacon Athelstane's foster child, and both father and son had fled away from Jemtland to Gothland. After that, Atli held on with his followers out of the Mælar by Stock Sound, and so on towards Denmark, and now he lies out in Öresound. He is an outlaw both of the Dane-King and of the Swede-King. Hrut held on south to the Sound, and when he came into it he saw many ships in the Sound. Then Wolf said—

"What's best to be done now, Iceland?"

"Hold on our course," says Hrut, "'for nothing venture, nothing have'. My ship and Auzur's shall go first, but thou shalt lay thy ship where thou likest."

"Seldom have I had others as a shield before me," says Wolf, and lays his galley side by side with Hrut's ship; and so they hold on through the Sound. Now those who are in the Sound see that ships are coming up to them, and they tell Atli.

He answered, "Then maybe there'll be gain to be got."

After that men took their stand on board each ship; "but my ship," says Atli, "shall be in the midst of the fleet."

Meantime Hrut's ships ran on, and as soon as either side could hear the other's hail, Atli stood up and said—

"Ye fare unwarily. Saw ye not that war-ships were in the Sound? But what's the name of your chief?"

Hrut tells his name.

"Whose man art thou?" says Atli.

"One of king Harold Grayfell's body-guard."

Atli said, "'Tis long since any love was lost between us, father and son, and your Norway kings."

"Worse luck for thee," says Hrut.

"Well," says Atli, "the upshot of our meeting will be, that thou shalt not be left alive to tell the tale;" and with that he caught up a spear and hurled it at Hrut's ship, and the man who stood before it got his death. After that the battle began, and they were slow in boarding Hrut's ship. Wolf, he went well forward, and with him it was now cut, now thrust. Atli's bowman's name was Asolf; he sprang up on Hrut's ship, and was four men's death before Hrut was ware of him; then he turned against him, and when they met, Asolf thrust at and through Hrut's shield, but Hrut cut once at Asolf, and that was his death-blow. Wolf the Unwashed saw that stroke, and called out—

"Truth to say, Hrut, thou dealest big blows, but thou'st much to thank Gunnhillda for."

"Something tells me," says Hrut, "that thou speakest with a 'fey' mouth."

Now Atli sees a bare place for a weapon on Wolf, and shot a spear through him, and now the battle grows hot: Atli leaps up on Hrut's ship, and clears it fast round about, and now Auzur turns to meet him, and thrust at him, but fell down full length on his back, for another man thrust at him. Now Hrut turns to meet Atli: he cut at once at Hrut's shield, and clove it all in two, from top to point; just then Atli got a blow on his hand from a stone, and down fell his sword. Hrut caught up the sword, and cut his foot from under him. After that he dealt him his death-blow. There they took much goods, and brought away with them two ships which were best, and stayed there only a little while. But meantime Soti and his crew had sailed past them, and he held on his course back to Norway, and made the land at Limgard's side. There Soti went on shore, and there he met Augmund, Gunnhillda's page; he knew him at once, and asks—

"How long meanest thou to be here?"

"Three nights," says Soti.

"Whither away, then?" says Augmund.

"West, to England," says Soti, "and never to come back again to Norway while Gunnhillda's rule is in Norway."

Augmund went away, and goes and finds Gunnhillda, for she was a little way off at a feast, and Gudred, her son, with her. Augmund told Gunnhillda what Soti meant to do, and she begged Gudred to take his life. So Gudred set off at once, and came unawares on Soti, and made them lead up the country, and hang him there. But the goods he took, and brought them to his mother, and she got men to carry them all down to the King's Crag, and after that she went thither herself.

Hrut came back towards autumn, and had gotten great store of goods. He went at once to the king, and had a hearty welcome. He begged them to take whatever they pleased of his goods, and the king took a third. Gunnhillda told Hrut how she had got hold of the inheritance, and had Soti slain. He thanked her, and gave her half of all he had.

CHAPTER VI. HRUT SAILS OUT TO ICELAND.

Hrut stayed with the king that winter in good cheer, but when spring came he grew very silent. Gunnhillda finds that out, and said to him when they two were alone together—

"Art thou sick at heart?"

"So it is," said Hrut, "as the saying runs—'Ill goes it with those who are born on a barren land'."

"Wilt thou to Iceland?" she asks.

"Yes," he answered.

"Hast thou a wife out there?" she asked; and he answers, "No."

"But I am sure that is true," she says; and so they ceased talking about the matter.

[Shortly after] Hrut went before the king and bade him "good day"; and the king said, "What dost thou want now, Hrut?"

"I am come to ask, lord, that you give me leave to go to Iceland."

"Will thine honour be greater there than here?" asks the king.

"No, it will not," said Hrut; "but every one must win the work that is set before him."

"It is pulling a rope against a strong man," said Gunnhillda, "so give him leave to go as best suits him."

There was a bad harvest that year in the land, yet Gunnhillda gave Hrut as much meal as he chose to have; and now he busks him to sail out to Iceland, and Auzur with him; and when they were all-boun, Hrut went to find the king and Gunnhillda. She led him aside to talk alone, and said to him—

"Here is a gold ring which I will give thee;" and with that she clasped it round his wrist.

"Many good gifts have I had from thee," said Hrut.

Then she put her hands round his neck and kissed him, and said—

"If I have as much power over thee as I think, I lay this spell on thee that thou mayest never have any pleasure in living with that woman on whom thy heart is set in Iceland, but with other women thou mayest get on well enough, and now it is like to go well with neither of us;—but thou hast not believed what I have been saying."

Hrut laughed when he heard that, and went away; after that he came before the king and thanked him; and the king spoke kindly to him, and bade him "farewell." Hrut went straight to his ship, and they had a fair wind all the way until they ran into Borgarfirth.

As soon as the ship was made fast to the land, Hrut rode west home, but Auzur stayed by the ship to unload her, and lay her up. Hrut rode straight to Hauskuldstede, and Hauskuld gave him a hearty welcome, and Hrut told him all about his travels. After that they sent men east across the rivers to tell Fiddle Mord to make ready for the bridal feast; but the two brothers rode to the ship, and on the way Hauskuld told Hrut how his money matters stood, and his goods had gained much since he was away. Then Hrut said—

"The reward is less worth than it ought to be, but I will give thee as much meal as thou needst for thy household next winter."

Then they drew the ship on land on rollers, and made her snug in her shed, but all the wares on board her they carried away into the Dales westward. Hrut stayed at home at Hrutstede till winter

was six weeks off, and then the brothers made ready, and Auzur with them, to ride to Hrut's wedding. Sixty men ride with them, and they rode east till they came to Rangriver plains. There they found a crowd of guests, and the men took their seats on benches down the length of the hall, but the women were seated on the cross benches on the dais, and the bride was rather downcast. So they drank out the feast and it went off well. Mord pays down his daughter's portion, and she rides west with her husband and his train. So they ride till they reach home. Hrut gave over everything into her hands inside the house, and all were pleased at that; but for all that she and Hrut did not pull well together as man and wife, and so things went on till spring, and when spring came Hrut had a journey to make to the Westfirths, to get in the money for which he had sold his wares; but before he set off his wife says to him—

"Dost thou mean to be back before men ride to the Thing?"

"Why dost thou ask?" said Hrut.

"I will ride to the Thing," she said, "to meet my father."

"So it shall be," said he, "and I will ride to the Thing along with thee."

"Well and good," she says.

After that Hrut rode from home west to the Firths, got in all his money, and laid it out anew, and rode home again. When he came home he busked him to ride to the Thing, and made all his neighbours ride with him. His brother Hauskuld rode among the rest. Then Hrut said to his wife—

"If thou hast as much mind now to go to the Thing as thou saidst a while ago, busk thyself and ride along with me."

She was not slow in getting herself ready, and then they all rode to the Thing. Unna went to her father's booth, and he gave her a hearty welcome, but she seemed somewhat heavy-hearted, and when he saw that he said to her—

"I have seen thee with a merrier face. Hast thou anything on thy mind?"

She began to weep, and answered nothing. Then he said to her again, "Why dost thou ride to the Thing, if thou wilt not tell me thy secret? Dost thou dislike living away there in the west?"

Then she answered him—

"I would give all I own in the world that I had never gone thither."

"Well!" said Mord, "I'll soon get to the bottom of this." Then he sends men to fetch Hauskuld and Hrut, and they came straight-way; and when they came in to see Mord, he rose up to meet them and gave them a hearty welcome, and asked them to sit down. Then they talked a long time in a friendly way, and at last Mord said to Hauskuld—

"Why does my daughter think so ill of life in the west yonder?"

"Let her speak out," said Hrut, "if she has anything to lay to my charge."

But she brought no charge against him. Then Hrut made them ask his neighbours and household how he treated her, and all bore him good witness, saying that she did just as she pleased in the house.

Then Mord said, "Home thou shalt go, and be content with thy lot; for all the witness goes better for him than for thee."

After that Hrut rode home from the Thing, and his wife with him, and all went smoothly between them that summer; but when spring came it was the old story over again, and things grew worse and worse as the spring went on. Hrut had again a journey to make west to the Firths, and gave out that he would not ride to the Althing, but Unna his wife said little about it. So Hrut went away west to the Firths.

CHAPTER VII. UNNA SEPARATES FROM HRUT.

Now the time for the Thing was coming on, Unna spoke to Sigmund Auzur's son, and asked if he would ride to the Thing with her; he said he could not ride if his kinsman Hrut set his face against it.

"Well!" says she, "I spoke to thee because I have better right to ask this from thee than from any one else."

He answered, "I will make a bargain with thee: thou must promise to ride back west with me, and to have no underhand dealings against Hrut or myself."

So she promised that, and then they rode to the Thing. Her father Mord was at the Thing, and was very glad to see her, and asked her to stay in his booth while the Thing lasted, and she did so.

"Now," said Mord, "what hast thou to tell me of thy mate, Hrut?"

Then she sung him a song, in which she praised Hrut's liberality, but said he was not master of himself. She herself was ashamed to speak out.

Mord was silent a short time, and then said—

"Thou hast now that on thy mind I see, daughter, which thou dost not wish that any one should know save myself, and thou wilt trust to me rather than any one else to help thee out of thy trouble."

Then they went aside to talk, to a place where none could overhear what they said; and then Mord said to his daughter—

"Now tell me all that is between you two, and don't make more of the matter than it is worth."

"So it shall be," she answered, and sang two songs, in which she revealed the cause of their misunderstanding; and when Mord pressed her to speak out, she told him how she and Hrut could not live together, because he was spell-bound, and that she wished to leave him.

"Thou didst right to tell me all this," said Mord, "and now I will give thee a piece of advice, which will stand thee in good stead, if thou canst carry it out to the letter. First of all, thou must ride home from the Thing, and by that time thy husband will have come back, and will be glad to see thee; thou must be blithe and buxom to him, and he will think a good change has come over thee, and thou must show no signs of coldness or ill-temper, but when spring comes thou must sham sickness, and take to thy bed. Hrut will not lose time in guessing what thy sickness can be, nor will he scold thee at all, but he will rather beg every one to take all the care they can of thee. After that he will set off west to the Firths, and Sigmund with him, for he will have to flit all his goods home from the Firths west, and he will be away till the summer is far spent. But when men ride to the Thing, and after all have ridden from the Dales that mean to ride thither, then thou must rise from thy bed and summon men to go along with thee to the Thing; and when thou art all-boun, then shalt thou go to thy bed, and the men with thee who are to bear thee company, and thou shalt take witness before thy husband's bed, and declare thyself separated from him by such a lawful separation as may hold good according to the judgment of the Great Thing, and the laws of the land; and at the man's door [the main door of the house] thou shalt take the same witness. After that ride away, and ride over Laxriverdale Heath, and so on over Holtbeacon Heath; for they will look for thee by way of Hrutfirth. And so ride on till thou comest to me; then I will see after the matter. But into his hands thou shalt never come more."

Now she rides home from the Thing, and Hrut had come back before her, and made her hearty welcome. She answered him kindly, and was blithe and forbearing towards him. So they lived happily together that half-year; but when spring came she fell sick, and kept her bed. Hrut set off west to the Firths, and bade them tend her well before he went. Now, when the time for the Thing comes, she busked herself to ride away, and did in every way as had been laid down for her; and then she rides away to the Thing. The country folk looked for her, but could not find her. Mord made his daughter welcome, and asked her if she had followed his advice; and she says, "I have not broken one tittle of it."

Then she went to the Hill of Laws, and declared herself separated from Hrut; and men thought this strange news. Unna went home with her father, and never went west from that day forward.

CHAPTER VIII. MORD CLAIMS HIS GOODS FROM HRUT.

Hrut came home, and knit his brows when he heard his wife was gone, but yet kept his feelings well in hand, and stayed at home all

that half-year, and spoke to no one on the matter. Next summer he rode to the Thing, with his brother Hauskuld, and they had a great following. But when he came to the Thing, he asked whether Fiddle Mord were at the Thing, and they told him he was; and all thought they would come to words at once about their matter, but it was not so. At last, one day when the brothers and others who were at the Thing went to the Hill of Laws, Mord took witness and declared that he had a money-suit against Hrut for his daughter's dower, and reckoned the amount at ninety hundreds in goods, calling on Hrut at the same time to pay and hand it over to him, and asking for a fine of three marks. He laid the suit in the Quarter Court, into which it would come by law, and gave lawful notice, so that all who stood on the Hill of Laws might hear.

But when he had thus spoken, Hrut said—

"Thou hast undertaken this suit, which belongs to thy daughter, rather for the greed of gain and love of strife than in kindness and manliness. But I shall have something to say against it; for the goods which belong to me are not yet in thy hands. Now, what I have to say is this, and I say it out, so that all who hear me on this hill may bear witness: I challenge thee to fight on the island; there on one side shall be laid all thy daughter's dower, and on the other I will lay down goods worth as much, and whoever wins the day shall have both dower and goods; but if thou wilt not fight with me, then thou shalt give up all claim to these goods."

Then Mord held his peace, and took counsel with his friends about going to fight on the island, and Jorund the priest gave him an answer.

"There is no need for thee to come to ask us for counsel in this matter, for thou knowest if thou fightest with Hrut thou wilt lose both life and goods. He has a good cause, and is besides mighty in himself and one of the boldest of men."

Then Mord spoke out, that he would not fight with Hrut, and there arose a great shout and hooting on the hill, and Mord got the greatest shame by his suit.

After that men ride home from the Thing, and those brothers Hauskuld and Hrut ride west to Reykiardale, and turned in as guests at Lund, where Thiostolf, Biorn Gullbera's son, then dwelt. There had been much rain that day, and men got wet, so long-fires were made down the length of the hall. Thiostolf, the master of the house, sat between Hauskuld and Hrut, and two boys, of whom Thiostolf had the rearing, were playing on the floor, and a girl was playing with them. They were great chatterboxes, for they were too young to know better. So one of them said—

"Now, I will be Mord, and summon thee to lose thy wife because thou hast not been a good husband to her."

Then the other answered—

"I will be Hrut, and I call on thee to give up all claim to thy goods, if thou dardest not to fight with me."

This they said several times, and all the household burst out laughing. Then Hauskuld got wroth, and struck the boy who called himself Mord with a switch, and the blow fell on his face, and graced the skin.

"Get out with thee," said Hauskuld to the boy, "and make no game of us;" but Hrut said, "Come hither to me," and the boy did so. Then Hrut drew a ring from his finger and gave it to him, and said—

"Go away, and try no man's temper henceforth."

Then the boy went away saying—

"Thy manliness I will bear in mind all my life."

From this matter Hrut got great praise, and after that they went home; and that was the end of Mord's and Hrut's quarrel.

CHAPTER IX. THORWALD GETS HALLGERDA TO WIFE.

Now, it must be told how Hallgerda, Hauskuld's daughter, grows up, and is the fairest of women to look on; she was tall of stature, too, and therefore she was called "Longcoat." She was fair-haired, and had so much of it that she could hide herself in it; but she was lavish and hard-hearted. Her foster-father's name was Thiostolf; he was a South islander by stock; he was a strong man, well skilled in arms, and had slain many men, and made no atonement

in money for one of them. It was said, too, that his rearing had not bettered Hallgerda's temper.

There was a man named Thorwald; he was Oswif's son, and dwelt out on Middlefells strand, under the Fell. He was rich and well to do, and owned the islands called Bear-isles, which lie out in Broadfirth, whence he got meal and stock fish. This Thorwald was a strong and courteous man, though somewhat hasty in temper. Now, it fell out one day that Thorwald and his father were talking together of Thorwald's marrying, and where he had best look for a wife, and it soon came out that he thought there wasn't a match fit for him far or near.

"Well," said Oswif, "wilt thou ask for Hallgerda Longcoat, Hauskuld's daughter?"

"Yes! I will ask for her," said Thorwald.

"But that is not a match that will suit either of you," Oswif went on to say, "for she has a will of her own, and thou art stern-tempered and unyielding."

"For all that I will try my luck there," said Thorwald, "so it's no good trying to hinder me."

"Ay!" said Oswif, "and the risk is all thine own."

After that they set off on a wooing journey to Hauskuldstede, and had a hearty welcome. They were not long in telling Hauskuld their business, and began to woo; then Hauskuld answered—

"As for you, I know how you both stand in the world, but for my own part I will use no guile towards you. My daughter has a hard temper, but as to her looks and breeding you can both see for yourselves."

"Lay down the terms of the match," answered Thorwald, "for I will not let her temper stand in the way of our bargain."

Then they talked over the terms of the bargain, and Hauskuld never asked his daughter what she thought of it, for his heart was set on giving her away, and so they came to an understanding as to the terms of the match. After that Thorwald betrothed himself to Hallgerda, and rode away home when the matter was settled.

CHAPTER X. HALLGERDA'S WEDDING.

Hauskuld told Hallgerda of the bargain he had made, and she said—

"Now that has been put to the proof which I have all along been afraid of, that thou lovest me not so much as thou art always saying, when thou hast not thought it worth while to tell me a word of all this matter. Besides, I do not think the match as good a one as thou hast always promised me."

So she went on, and let them know in every way that she thought she was thrown away.

Then Hauskuld said—

"I do not set so much store by thy pride as to let it stand in the way of my bargains; and my will, not thine, shall carry the day if we fell out on any point."

"The pride of all you kinsfolk is great," she said, "and so it is not wonderful if I have some of it."

With that she went away, and found her foster-father Thiostolf, and told him what was in store for her, and was very heavy-hearted. Then Thiostolf said—

"Be of good cheer, for thou wilt be married a second time, and then they will ask thee what thou thinkest of the match; for I will do in all things as thou wishest, except in what touches thy father or Hrut."

After that they spoke no more of the matter, and Hauskuld made ready the bridal feast, and rode off to ask men to it. So he came to Hrutstede and called Hrut out to speak with him. Hrut went out, and they began to talk, and Hauskuld told him the whole story of the bargain, and bade him to the feast, saying—

"I should be glad to know that thou dost not feel hurt though I did not tell thee when the bargain was being made."

"I should be better pleased," said Hrut, "to have nothing at all to do with it; for this match will bring luck neither to him nor to her; but still I will come to the feast if thou thinkest it will add any honour to thee."

"Of course I think so," said Hauskuld, and rode off home.

Oswif and Thorwald also asked men to come, so that no fewer than one hundred guests were asked.

There was a man named Swan, who dwelt in Bearfirth, which lies north from Steingrimsfirth. This Swan was a great wizard, and he was Hallgerda's mother's brother. He was quarrelsome, and hard to deal with, but Hallgerda asked him to the feast, and sends Thioistolf to him; so he went, and it soon got to friendship between him and Swan.

Now men come to the feast, and Hallgerda sat upon the cross-bench, and she was a very merry bride. Thioistolf was always talking to her, though he sometimes found time to speak to Swan, and men thought their talking strange. The feast went off well, and Hauskuld paid down Hallgerda's portion with the greatest readiness. After he had done that, he said to Hrut—

"Shall I bring out any gifts beside?"

"The day will come," answered Hrut, "when thou wilt have to waste thy goods for Hallgerda's sake, so hold thy hand now."

CHAPTER XI. THORWALD'S SLAYING.

Thorwald rode home from the bridal feast, and his wife with him, and Thioistolf, who rode by her horse's side, and still talked to her in a low voice. Oswif turned to his son and said—

"Art thou pleased with thy match? and how went it when ye talked together?"

"Well," said he, "she showed all kindness to me. Thou mightst see that by the way she laughs at every word I say."

"I don't think her laughter so hearty as thou dost," answered Oswif, "but this will be put to the proof by and by."

So they ride on till they come home, and at night she took her seat by her husband's side, and made room for Thioistolf next herself on the inside. Thioistolf and Thorwald had little to do with each other, and few words were thrown away between them that winter, and so time went on. Hallgerda was prodigal and grasping, and there was nothing that any of their neighbours had that she must not have too, and all that she had, no matter whether it were her own or belonged to others, she waited. But when the spring came there was a scarcity in the house, both of meal and stock fish, so Hallgerda went up to Thorwald and said—

"Thou must not be sitting indoors any longer, for we want for the house both meal and fish."

"Well," said Thorwald, "I did not lay in less for the house this year than I laid in before, and then it used to last till summer."

"What care I," said Hallgerda, "if thou and thy father have made your money by starving yourselves."

Then Thorwald got angry and gave her a blow on the face and drew blood, and went away and called his men and ran the skiff down to the shore. Then six of them jumped into her and rowed out to the Bear-isles, and began to load her with meal and fish.

Meantime it is said that Hallgerda sat out of doors heavy at heart. Thioistolf went up to her and saw the wound on her face, and said—

"Who has been playing thee this sorry trick?"

"My husband Thorwald," she said, "and thou stoodst aloof, though thou wouldst not if thou hadst cared at all for me."

"Because I knew nothing about it," said Thioistolf, "but I will avenge it."

Then he went away down to the shore and ran out a six-oared boat, and held in his hand a great axe that he had with a haft overlaid with iron. He steps into the boat and rows out to the Bear-isles, and when he got there all the men had rowed away but Thorwald and his followers, and he stayed by the skiff to load her, while they brought the goods down to him. So Thioistolf came up just then and jumped into the skiff and began to load with him, and after a while he said—

"Thou canst do but little at this work, and that little thou dost badly."

"Thinkest thou thou canst do it better?" said Thorwald.

"There's one thing to be done which I can do better than thou," said Thioistolf, and then he went on—

"The woman who is thy wife has made a bad match, and you shall not live much longer together."

Then Thorwald snatched up a fishing-knife that lay by him, and made a stab at Thioistolf; he had lifted his axe to his shoulder and dashed it down. It came on Thorwald's arm and crushed the wrist, but down fell the knife. Then Thioistolf lifted up his axe a second time and gave Thorwald a blow on the head, and he fell dead on the spot.

CHAPTER XII. THIOSTOLF'S FLIGHT.

While this was going on, Thorwald's men came down with their load, but Thioistolf was not slow in his plans. He hewed with both hands at the gunwale of the skiff and cut it down about two planks; then he leapt into his boat, but the dark blue sea poured into the skiff, and down she went with all her freight. Down too sank Thorwald's body, so that his men could not see what had been done to him, but they knew well enough that he was dead, Thioistolf rowed away up the firth, but they shouted after him wishing him ill luck. He made them no answer, but rowed on till he got home, and ran the boat up on the beach, and went up to the house with his axe, all bloody as it was, on his shoulder. Hallgerda stood out of doors, and said—

"Thine axe is bloody; what hast thou done?"

"I have done now what will cause thee to be wedded a second time."

"Thou tellest me then that Thorwald is dead?" she said.

"So it is," said he, "and now look out for my safety."

"So I will," she said; "I will send thee north to Bearfirth, to Swanshol, and Swan, my kinsman, will receive thee with open arms. He is so mighty a man that no one will seek thee thither."

So he saddled a horse that she had, and jumped on his back, and rode off north to Bearfirth, to Swanshol, and Swan received him with open arms, and said—

"That's what I call a man who does not stick at trifles! And now I promise thee if they seek thee here, they shall get nothing but the greatest shame."

Now, the story goes back to Hallgerda, and how she behaved. She called on Liot the black, her kinsman, to go with her, and bade him saddle their horses, for she said—"I will ride home to my father."

While he made ready for their journey, she went to her chests and unlocked them, and called all the men of her house about her, and gave each of them some gift; but they all grieved at her going. Now she rides home to her father; and he received her well, for as yet he had not heard the news. But Hrut said to Hallgerda—

"Why did not Thorwald come with thee?" and she answered—

"He is dead."

Then Said Hauskuld—

"That was Thioistolf's doing?"

"It was," she said.

"Ah!" said Hauskuld, "Hrut was not for wrong when he told me that this bargain would draw mickle misfortune after it. But there's no good in troubling one's self about a thing that's done and gone."

Now the story must go back to Thorwald's mates, how there they ate, and how they begged the loan of a boat to get to the mainland. So a boat was lent them at once, and they rowed up the firth to Reykianess, and found Oswif, and told him these tidings.

He said, "Ill luck is the end of ill reds, and now I see how it has all gone. Hallgerda must have sent Thioistolf to Bearfirth, but she herself must have ridden home to her father. Let us now gather folk and follow him up thither north." So they did that, and went about asking for help, and got together many men. And then they all rode off to Steingrims river, and so on to Liotriverdale and Selriverdale, till they came to Bearfirth.

Now Swan began to speak, and gasped much. "Now Oswif's fetches are seeking us out." Then up sprung Thioistolf, but Swan said, "Go thou out with me, there won't be need of much." So they went out both of them, and Swan took a goatskin and wrapped it about his own head, and said, "Become mist and fog, become fright and wonder mickle to all those who seek thee."

Now, it must be told how Oswif, his friends, and his men are riding along the ridge; then came a great mist against them, and

Oswif said, "This is Swan's doing; 'twere well if nothing worse followed." A little after a mighty darkness came before their eyes, so that they could see nothing, and then they fell off their horses' backs, and lost their horses, and dropped their weapons, and went over head and ears into bogs, and some went astray into the wood, till they were on the brink of bodily harm. Then Oswif said, "If I could only find my horse and weapons, then I'd turn back"; and he had scarce spoken these words than they saw somewhat, and found their horses and weapons. Then many still egged the others on to look after the chase once more; and so they did, and at once the same wonders befell them, and so they fared thrice. Then Oswif said, "Though the course be not good, let us still turn back. Now, we will take counsel a second time, and what now pleases my mind best, is to go and find Hauskuld, and ask atonement for my son; for there's hope of honour where there's good store of it."

So they rode thence to the Broadfirth dales, and there is nothing to be told about them till they come to Hauskuldstede, and Hrut was there before them. Oswif called out Hauskuld and Hrut, and they both went out and bade him good-day. After that they began to talk. Hauskuld asked Oswif whence he came. He said he had set out to search for Thioistolf, but couldn't find him. Hauskuld said he must have gone north to Swanshol, "and thither it is not every man's lot to go to find him."

"Well," says Oswif, "I am come hither for this, to ask atonement for my son from thee."

Hauskuld answered—"I did not slay thy son, nor did I plot his death; still it may be forgiven thee to look for atonement somewhere."

"Nose is next of kin, brother, to eyes," said Hrut, "and it is needful to stop all evil tongues, and to make him atonement for his son, and so mend thy daughter's state, for that will only be the case when this suit is dropped, and the less that is said about it the better it will be."

Hauskuld said—"Wilt thou undertake the award?"

"That I will," says Hrut, "nor will I shield thee at all in my award; for if the truth must be told thy daughter planned his death."

Then Hrut held his peace some little while, and afterwards he stood up, and said to Oswif—"Take now my hand in handsel as a token that thou lettest the suit drop."

So Oswif stood up and said—"This is not an atonement on equal terms when thy brother utters the award, but still thou (speaking to Hrut) hast behaved so well about it that I trust thee thoroughly to make it" Then he stood up and took Hauskuld's hand, and came to an atonement in the matter, on the understanding that Hrut was to make up his mind and utter the award before Oswif went away. After that, Hrut made his award, and said—"For the slaying of Thorwald I award two hundred in silver"—that was then thought a good price for a man—"and thou shalt pay it down at once, brother, and pay it too with an open hand."

Hauskuld did so, and then Hrut said to Oswif—"I will give thee a good cloak which I brought with me from foreign lands."

He thanked him for his gift, and went home well pleased at the way in which things had gone.

After that Hauskuld and Hrut came to Oswif to share the goods, and they and Oswif came to a good agreement about that too, and they went home with their share of the goods, and Oswif is now out of our story. Hallgerda begged Hauskuld to let her come back home to him, and he gave her leave, and for a long time there was much talk about Thorwald's slaying. As for Hallgerda's goods they went on growing till they were worth a great sum.

CHAPTER XIII. GLUM'S WOOING.

Now three brothers are named in the story. One was called Thorarin, the second Ragi, and the third Glum. They were the sons of Olof the Halt, and were men of much worth and of great wealth in goods. Thorarin's surname was Ragi's brother; he had the Speakership of the Law after Rafn Heing's son. He was a very wise man, and lived at Varmalek, and he and Glum kept house together. Glum had been long abroad; he was a tall, strong, handsome man. Ragi their brother was a great man-slayer. Those brothers owned in the south Engey and Laugarness. One day the brothers Tho-

rarin and Glum were talking together, and Thorarin asked Glum whether he meant to go abroad, as was his wont.

He answered—"I was rather thinking now of leaving off trading voyages."

"What hast thou then in thy mind? Wilt thou woo thee a wife?"

"That I will," says he, "if I could only get myself well matched."

Then Thorarin told off all the women who were unwedded in Borgarfirth, and asked him if he would have any of these—"Say the word, and I will ride with thee!"

But Glum answered—"I will have none of these."

"Say then the name of her thou wishest to have," says Thorarin.

Glum answered—"If thou must know, her name is Hallgerda, and she is Hauskuld's daughter away west in the dales."

"Well," says Thorarin, "'tis not with thee as the saw says, 'be warned by another's woe'; for she was wedded to a man, and she plotted his death."

Glum said—"May be such ill-luck will not befall her a second time, and sure I am she will not plot my death. But now, if thou wilt show me any honour, ride along with me to woo her."

Thorarin said—"There's no good striving against it, for what must be is sure to happen." Glum often talked the matter over with Thorarin, but he put it off a long time. At last it came about that they gathered men together and rode off ten in company, west to the dales, and came to Hauskuldstede. Hauskuld gave them a hearty welcome, and they stayed there that night. But early next morning, Hauskuld sends Hrut, and he came thither at once; and Hauskuld was out of doors when he rode into the "town." Then Hauskuld told Hrut what men had come thither.

"What may it be they want?" asked Hrut

"As yet," says Hauskuld, "they have not let out to me that they have any business."

"Still," says Hrut, "their business must be with thee. They will ask the hand of thy daughter, Hallgerda. If they do, what answer wilt thou make?"

"What dost thou advise me to say?" says Hauskuld.

"Thou shalt answer well," says Hrut; "but still make a clean breast of all the good and all the ill thou knowest of the woman."

But while the brothers were talking thus, out came the guests. Hauskuld greeted them well, and Hrut bade both Thorarin and his brothers good morning. After that they all began to talk, and Thorarin said—

"I am come hither, Hauskuld, with my brother Glum on this errand, to ask for Hallgerda thy daughter, at the hand of my brother Glum. Thou must know that he is a man of worth."

"I know well," says Hauskuld, "that ye are both of you powerful and worthy men; but I must tell you right out, that I chose a husband for her before, and that turned out most unluckily for us."

Thorarin answered—"We will not let that stand in the way of the bargain; for one oath shall not become all oaths, and this may prove to be a good match, though that turned out ill; besides Thioistolf had most hand in spoiling it."

Then Hrut spoke: "Now I will give you a bit of advice—this: if ye will not let all this that has already happened to Hallgerda stand in the way of the match, mind you do not let Thioistolf go south with her if the match comes off, and that he is never there longer than three nights at a time, unless Glum gives him leave, but fall an outlaw by Glum's hand without atonement if he stay there longer. Of course, it shall be in Glum's power to give him leave; but he will not if he takes my advice. And now this match, shall not be fulfilled, as the other was, without Hallgerda's knowledge. She shall now know the whole course of this bargain, and see Glum, and herself settle whether she will have him or not; and then she will not be able to lay the blame on others if it does not turn out well. And all this shall be without craft or guile."

Then Thorarin said—"Now, as always, it will prove best if thy advice be taken."

Then they sent for Hallgerda, and she came thither, and two women with her. She had on a cloak of rich blue wool, and under it a scarlet kirtle, and a silver girdle round her waist, but her hair came down on both sides of her bosom, and she had turned the locks up under her girdle. She sat down between Hrut and her father, and she greeted them all with kind words, and spoke well

and boldly, and asked what was the news. After that she ceased speaking.

Then Glum said—"There has been some talk between thy father and my brother Thorarin and myself about a bargain. It was that I might get thee, Hallgerda, if it be thy will, as it is theirs; and now, if thou art a brave woman, thou wilt say right out whether the match is at all to thy mind; but if thou hast anything in thy heart against this bargain with us, then we will not say anything more about it."

Hallgerda said—"I know well that you are men of worth and might, ye brothers. I know too that now I shall be much better wedded than I was before; but what I want to know is, what you have said already about the match, and how far you have given your words in the matter. But so far as I now see of thee, I think I might love thee well if we can but hit it off as to temper."

So Glum himself told her all about the bargain, and left nothing out, and then he asked Hauskuld and Hrut whether he had repeated it right. Hauskuld said he had; and then Hallgerda said—"Ye have dealt so well with me in this matter, my father and Hrut, that I will do what ye advise, and this bargain shall be struck as ye have settled it."

Then Hrut said—"Methinks it were best that Hauskuld and I should name witnesses, and that Hallgerda should betroth herself, if the Lawman thinks that right and lawful."

"Right and lawful it is," says Thorarin.

After that Hallgerda's goods were valued, and Glum was to lay down as much against them, and they were to go shares, half and half, in the whole. Then Glum bound himself to Hallgerda as his betrothed, and they rode away home south; but Hauskuld was to keep the wedding-feast at his house. And now all is quiet till men ride to the wedding.

CHAPTER XIV. GLUM'S WEDDING.

Those brothers gathered together a great company, and they were all picked men. They rode west to the dales and came to Hauskuld-stede, and there they found a great gathering to meet them. Hauskuld and Hrut, and their friends, filled one bench, and the bridegroom the other. Hallgerda sat upon the cross-bench on the dais, and behaved well. Thiestolf went about with his axe raised in air, and no one seemed to know that he was there, and so the wedding went off well. But when the feast was over, Hallgerda went away south with Glum and his brothers. So when they came south to Varmalek, Thorarin asked Hallgerda if she would undertake the housekeeping, "No, I will not," she said. Hallgerda kept her temper down that winter, and they liked her well enough. But when the spring came, the brothers talked about their property, and Thorarin said—"I will give up to you the house at Varmalek, for that is readiest to your hand, and I will go down south to Laugarness and live there, but Engey we will have both of us in common."

Glum was willing enough to do that. So Thorarin went down to the south of that district, and Glum and his wife stayed behind there, and lived in the house at Varmalek.

Now Hallgerda got a household about her; she was prodigal in giving, and grasping in getting. In the summer she gave birth to a girl. Glum asked her what name it was to have.

"She shall be called after my father's mother, and her name shall be Thorgerda," for she came down from Sigurd Fafnir's-bane on the father's side, according to the family pedigree.

So the maiden was sprinkled with water, and had this name given her, and there she grew up, and got like her mother in looks and feature. Glum and Hallgerda agreed well together, and so it went on for a while. About that time these tidings were heard from the north and Bearfirth, how Swan had rowed out to fish in the spring, and a great storm came down on him from the east, and how he was driven ashore at Fishless, and he and his men were there lost. But the fishermen who were at Kalback thought they saw Swan go into the fell at Kalbackshorn, and that he was greeted well; but some spoke against that story, and said there was nothing in it. But this all knew that he was never seen again either alive or dead. So when Hallgerda heard that, she thought she had a great loss in her mother's brother. Glum begged Thorarin to change lands with him, but he said he would not; "but," said he,

"if I outlive you, I mean to have Varmalek to myself." When Glum told this to Hallgerda, she said, "Thorarin has indeed a right to expect this from us."

CHAPTER XV. THIOSTOLF GOES TO GLUM'S HOUSE.

Thiestolf had beaten one of Hauskuld's house-carles, so he drove him away. He took his horse and weapons, and said to Hauskuld—"Now, I will go away and never come back."

"All will be glad at that," says Hauskuld.

Thiestolf rode till he came to Varmalek, and there he got a hearty welcome from Hallgerda, and not a bad one from Glum. He told Hallgerda how her father had driven him away, and begged her to give him her help and countenance. She answered him by telling him she could say nothing about his staying there before she had seen Glum about it.

"Does it go well between you?" he says.

"Yes," she says, "our love runs smooth enough."

After that she went to speak to Glum, and threw her arms round his neck and said—

"Wilt thou grant me a boon which I wish to ask of thee?"

"Grant it I will," he says, "if it be right and seemly; but what is it thou wishest to ask?"

"Well," she said, "Thiestolf has been driven away from the west, and what I want thee to do is to let him stay here; but I will not take it crossly if it is not to thy mind."

Glum said—"Now that thou behavest so well, I will grant thee thy boon; but I tell thee, if he takes to any ill he shall be sent off at once."

She goes then to Thiestolf and tells him, and he answered—

"Now, thou art still good, as I had hoped."

After that he was there, and kept himself down a little white, but then it was the old story, he seemed to spoil all the good he found; for he gave way to no one save to Hallgerda alone, but she never took his side in his brawls with others. Thorarin, Glum's brother, blamed him for letting him be there, and said ill luck would come of it, and all would happen as had happened before if he were there. Glum answered him well and kindly, but still kept on in his own way.

CHAPTER XVI. GLUM'S SHEEP HUNT.

Now once on a time when autumn came, it happened that men had hard work to get their flocks home, and many of Glum's wethers were missing. Then Glum said to Thiestolf—

"Go thou up on the fell with my house-carles and see if ye cannot find out anything about the sheep."

"'Tis no business of mine," says Thiestolf, "to hunt up sheep, and this one thing is quite enough to hinder it. I won't walk in thy thralls' footsteps. But go thyself, and then I'll go with thee."

About this they had many words. The weather was good, and Hallgerda was sitting out of doors. Glum went up to her and said—

"Now Thiestolf and I have had a quarrel, and we shall not live much longer together." And so he told her all that they had been talking about.

Then Hallgerda spoke up for Thiestolf, and they had many words about him. At last Glum gave her a blow with his hand, and said—

"I will strive no longer with thee," and with that he went away.

Now she loved him much, and could not calm herself, but wept out loud. Thiestolf went up to her and said—

"This is sorry sport for thee, and so it must not be often again."

"Nay," she said, "but thou shalt not avenge this, nor meddle at all whatever passes between Glum and me."

He went off with a spiteful grin.

CHAPTER XVII. GLUM'S SLAYING.

Now Glum called men to follow him, and Thiestolf got ready and went with them. So they went up South Reykiardale and then up along by Baugagil and so south to Crossfell. But some of his band

he sent to the Sulafells, and they all found very many sheep. Some of them, too, went by way of Scoradale, and it came about at last that those twain, Glum and Thioستolf, were left alone together. They went south from Crossfell and found there a flock of wild sheep, and they went from the south towards the fell, and tried to drive them down; but still the sheep got away from them up on the fell. Then each began to scold the other, and Thioستolf said at last that Glum had no strength save to tumble about in Hallgerda's arms.

Then Glum said—

"A man's foes are those of his own house.' Shall I take upbraiding from thee, runaway thrall as thou art?"

Thioستolf said—

"Thou shalt soon have to own that I am no thrall, for I will not yield an inch to thee."

Then Glum got angry, and cut at him with his hand-axe, but he threw his axe in the way, and the blow fell on the haft with a downward stroke and bit into it about the breadth of two fingers. Thioستolf cut at him at once with his axe, and smote him on the shoulder, and the stroke hewed asunder the shoulderbone and collarbone, and the wound bled inwards. Glum grasped at Thioستolf with his left hand so fast that he fell; but Glum could not hold him, for death came over him. Then Thioستolf covered his body with stones, and took off his gold ring. Then he went straight to Varmalek. Hallgerda was sitting out of doors, and saw that his axe was bloody. He said—

"I know not what thou wilt think of it, but I tell thee Glum is slain."

"That must be thy deed?" she says.

"So it is," he says.

She laughed and said—

"Thou dost not stand for nothing in this sport."

"What thinkest thou is best to be done now?" he asked.

"Go to Hrut, my father's brother," she said, "and let him see about thee."

"I do not know," says Thioستolf, "whether this is good advice; but still I will take thy counsel in this matter."

So he took his horse, and rode west to Hrutstede that night. He binds his horse at the back of the house, and then goes round to the door, and gives a great knock. After that he walks round the house, north about. It happened that Hrut was awake. He sprang up at once, and put on his jerkin and pulled on his shoes. Then he took up his sword, and wrapped a cloak about his left arm, up as far as the elbow. Men woke up just as he went out; there he saw a tall stout man at the back of the house, and knew it was Thioستolf. Hrut asked him what news.

"I tell thee Glum is slain," says Thioستolf.

"Who did the deed?" says Hrut.

"I slew him," says Thioستolf.

"Why rodest thou hither?" says Hrut.

"Hallgerda sent me to thee," says Thioستolf.

"Then she has no hand in this deed," says Hrut, and drew his sword. Thioستolf saw that, and would not be behind hand, so he cuts at Hrut at once. Hrut got out of the way of the stroke by a quick turn, and at the same time struck the back of the axe so smartly with a side-long blow of his left hand, that it flew out of Thioستolf's grasp. Then Hrut made a blow with the sword in his right hand at Thioستolf's leg, just above the knee, and cut it almost off so that it hung by a little piece, and sprang in upon him at the same time, and thrust him hard back. After that he smote him on the head, and dealt him his death-blow. Thioستolf fell down on his back at full length, and then out came Hrut's men, and saw the tokens of the deed. Hrut made them take Thioستolf away, and throw stones over his body, and then he went to find Hauskuld, and told him of Glum's slaying, and also of Thioستolf's. He thought it harm that Glum was dead and gone, but thanked him for killing Thioستolf. A little while after, Thorarin Ragi's brother hears of his brother Glum's death, then he rides with eleven men behind him west to Hauskuldstede, and Hauskuld welcomed him with both hands, and he is there the night. Hauskuld sent at once for Hrut to come to him, and he went at once, and next day they spoke much of the slaying of Glum, and Thorarin said—"Wilt thou make me any atonement for my brother, for I have had a great loss?"

Hauskuld answered—"I did not slay thy brother, nor did my daughter plot his death; but as soon as ever Hrut knew it he slew Thioستolf."

Then Thorarin held his peace, and thought the matter had taken a bad turn. But Hrut said—"Let us make his journey good; he has indeed had a heavy loss, and if we do that we shall be well spoken of. So let us give him gifts, and then he will be our friend ever afterwards."

So the end of it was that those brothers gave him gifts, and he rode back south. He and Hallgerda changed homesteads in the spring, and she went south to Laugarness and he to Varmalek. And now Thorarin is out of the story.

CHAPTER XVIII. FIDDLE MORD'S DEATH.

Now it must be told how Fiddle Mord took a sickness and breathed his last; and that was thought great scathe. His daughter Unna took all the goods he left behind him. She was then still unmarried the second time. She was very lavish, and unthrifty of her property; so that her goods and ready money wasted away, and at last she had scarce anything left but land and stock.

CHAPTER XIX. GUNNAR COMES INTO THE STORY.

There was a man whose name was Gunnar. He was one of Unna's kinsmen, and his mother's name was Rannveig. Gunnar's father was named Hamond. Gunnar Hamond's son dwelt at Lithend, in the Fleetlithe. He was a tall man in growth, and a strong man—best skilled in arms of all men. He could cut or thrust or shoot if he chose as well with his left as with his right hand, and he smote so swiftly with his sword, that three seemed to flash through the air at once. He was the best shot with the bow of all men, and never missed his mark. He could leap more than his own height, with all his war-gear, and as far backwards as forwards. He could swim like a seal, and there was no game in which it was any good for anyone to strive with him; and so it has been said that no man was his match. He was handsome of feature, and fair skinned. His nose was straight, and a little turned up at the end. He was blue-eyed and bright-eyed, and ruddy-cheeked. His hair thick, and of good hue, and hanging down in comely curls. The most courteous of men was he, of sturdy frame and strong will, bountiful and gentle, a fast friend, but hard to please when making them. He was wealthy in goods. His brother's name was Kolskegg; he was a tall strong man, a noble fellow, and undaunted in everything. Another brother's name was Hjort; he was then in his childhood. Orm Skogarnef was a base-born brother of Gunnar's; he does not come into this story. Arnguda was the name of Gunnar's sister. Hroar, the priest at Tongue, had her to wife.

CHAPTER XX. OF NJAL AND HIS CHILDREN.

There was a man whose name was Njal. He was the son of Thorgeir Gelling, the son of Thorolf. Njal's mother's name was Asgerda. Njal dwelt at Bergthorsknoll in the land-isles; he had another homestead on Thorolf'sfell. Njal was wealthy in goods, and handsome of face; no beard grew on his chin. He was so great a lawyer, that his match was not to be found. Wise too he was, and foreknowing and foresighted. Of good counsel, and ready to give it, and all that he advised men was sure to be the best for them to do. Gentle and generous, he unravelled every man's knotty points who came to see him about them. Bergthora was his wife's name; she was Skarphedinn's daughter, a very high-spirited, brave-hearted woman, but somewhat hard-tempered. They had six children, three daughters and three sons, and they all come afterwards into this story.

CHAPTER XXI. UNNA GOES TO SEE GUNNAR.

Now it must be told how Unna had lost all her ready money. She made her way to Lithend, and Gunnar greeted his kinswoman well. She stayed there that night, and the next morning they sat out of doors and talked. The end of their talk was that she told him how heavily she was pressed for money.

"This is a bad business," he said.

"What help wilt thou give me out of my distress?" she asked.

He answered—"Take as much money as thou needest from what I have out at interest."

"Nay," she said, "I will not waste thy goods."

"What then dost thou wish?"

"I wish thee to get back my goods out of Hrut's hands," she answered.

"That, methinks, is not likely," said he, "when thy father could not get them back, and yet he was a great lawyer, but I know little about law."

She answered—"Hrut pushed that matter through rather by boldness than by law; besides, my father was old, and that was why men thought it better not to drive things to the uttermost. And now there is none of my kinsmen to take this suit up if thou hast not daring enough."

"I have courage enough," he replied, "to get these goods back; but I do not know how to take the suit up."

"Well!" she answered, "go and see Njal of Bergthorsknoll, he will know how to give thee advice. Besides, he is a great friend of thine."

"'Tis like enough he will give me good advice, as he gives it to every one else," says Gunnar.

So the end of their talk was, that Gunnar undertook her cause, and gave her the money she needed for her housekeeping, and after that she went home.

Now Gunnar rides to see Njal, and he made him welcome, and they began to talk at once.

Then Gunnar said—"I am come to seek a bit of good advice from thee."

Njal replied—"Many of my friends are worthy of this, but still I think I would take more pains for none than for thee."

Gunnar said—"I wish to let thee know that I have undertaken to get Unna's goods back from Hrut."

"A very hard suit to undertake," said Njal, "and one very hazardous how it will go; but still I will get it up for thee in the way I think likeliest to succeed, and the end will be good if thou breakest none of the rules I lay down; if thou dost, thy life is in danger."

"Never fear; I will break none of them," said Gunnar.

Then Njal held his peace for a little while, and after that he spoke as follows:—

CHAPTER XXII. NJAL'S ADVICE.

"I have thought over the suit, and it will do so. Thou shalt ride from home with two men at thy back. Over all thou shalt have a great rough cloak, and under that, a russet kirtle of cheap stuff, and under all, thy good clothes. Thou must take a small axe in thy hand, and each of you must have two horses, one fat, the other lean. Thou shalt carry hardware and smith's work with thee hence, and ye must ride off early to-morrow morning, and when ye are come across Whitewater westwards, mind and slouch thy hat well over thy brows. Then men will ask who is this tall man, and thy mates shall say—"Here is Huckster Hedinn the Big, a man from Eyjafirth, who is going about with smith's work for sale'. This Hedinn is ill-tempered and a chatterer—a fellow who thinks he alone knows everything. Very often he snatches back his wares, and flies at men if everything is not done as he wishes. So thou shalt ride west to Borgarfirth offering all sorts of wares for sale, and be sure often to cry off thy bargains, so that it will be noised abroad that Huckster Hedinn is the worst of men to deal with, and that no lies have been told of his bad behaviour. So thou shalt ride to Northwaterdale, and to Hrutfirth, and Laxriverdale, till thou comest to Hauskuldstede. There thou must stay a night, and sit in the lowest place, and hang thy head down. Hauskuld will tell them all not to

meddle nor make with Huckster Hedinn, saying he is a rude unfriendly fellow. Next morning thou must be off early and go to the farm nearest Hrutstede. There thou must offer thy goods for sale, praising up all that is worst, and tinkering up the faults. The master of the house will pry about and find out the faults. Thou must snatch the wares away from him, and speak ill to him. He will say—"Twas not to be hoped that thou wouldst behave well to him, when thou behavest ill to every one else. Then thou shalt fly at him, though it is not thy wont, but mind and spare thy strength, that thou mayest not be found out. Then a man will be sent to Hrutstede to tell Hrut he had best come and part you. He will come at once and ask thee to his house, and thou must accept his offer. Thou shalt greet Hrut, and he will answer well. A place will be given thee on the lower bench over against Hrut's high-seat. He will ask if thou art from the North, and thou shalt answer that thou art a man of Eyjafirth. He will go on to ask if there are very many famous men there. 'Shabby fellows enough and to spare,' thou must answer. 'Dost thou know Reykiardale and the parts about?' he will ask. To which thou must answer—"I know all Iceland by heart'.

"Are there any stout champions left in Reykiardale?" he will ask. 'Thieves and scoundrels,' thou shalt answer. Then Hrut will smile and think it sport to listen. You two will go on to talk of the men in the Eastfirth Quarter, and thou must always find something to say against them. At last your talk will come to Rangrivale, and then thou must say, there is small choice of men left in those parts since Fiddle Mord died. At the same time sing some stave to please Hrut, for I know thou art a skald. Hrut will ask what makes thee say there is never a man to come in Mord's place; and then thou must answer, that he was so wise a man and so good a taker up of suits, that he never made a false step in upholding his leadership. He will ask—"Dost thou know how matters fared between me and him?"

"I know all about it," thou must reply, 'he took thy wife from thee, and thou hadst not a word to say'.

"Then Hrut will ask—"Dost thou not think it was some disgrace to him when he could not get back his goods, though he set the suit on foot?"

"I can answer thee that well enough," thou must say, 'Thou challengedst him to single combat; but he was old, and so his friends advised him not to fight with thee, and then they let the suit fall to the ground'.

"True enough," Hrut will say. 'I said so, and that passed for law among foolish men; but the suit might have been taken up again at another Thing if he had the heart'.

"I know all that," thou must say.

"Then he will ask—"Dost thou know anything about law?"

"Up in the North I am thought to know something about it," thou shalt say. 'But still I should like thee to tell me how this suit should be taken up'.

"What suit dost thou mean?" he will ask.

"A suit," thou must answer, 'which does not concern me. I want to know how a man must set to work who wishes to get back Unna's dower'.

"Then Hrut will say—"In this suit I must be summoned so that I can hear the summons, or I must be summoned here in my lawful house'.

"Recite the summons, then," thou must say, and I will say it after thee'.

"Then Hrut will summon himself; and mind and pay great heed to every word he says. After that Hrut will bid thee repeat the summons, and thou must do so, and say it all wrong, so that no more than every other word is right.

"Then Hrut will smile and not mistrust thee, but say that scarce a word is right. Thou must throw the blame on thy companions, and say they put thee out, and then thou must ask him to say the words first, word by word, and to let thee say the words after him. He will give thee leave, and summon himself in the suit, and thou shalt summon after him there and then, and this time say every word right. When it is done, ask Hrut if that were rightly summoned, and he will answer 'there is no flaw to be found in it'. Then thou shalt say in a loud voice, so that thy companions may hear—

"I summon thee in the suit which Unna Mord's daughter has made over to me with her plighted hand."

"But when men are sound asleep, you shall rise and take your bridles and saddles, and tread softly, and go out of the house, and put your saddles on your fat horses in the fields, and so ride off on them, but leave the others behind you. You must ride up into the hills away from the home pastures and stay there three nights, for about so long will they seek you. After that ride home south, riding always by night and resting by day. As for us we will then ride this summer to the Thing, and help thee in thy suit." So Gunnar thanked Njal, and first of all rode home.

CHAPTER XXIII. HUCKSTER HEDINN.

Gunnar rode from home two nights afterwards, and two men with him; they rode along until they got on Bluewoodheath, and then men on horseback met them and asked who that tall man might be of whom so little was seen. But his companions said it was Huckster Hedinn. Then the others said a worse was not to be looked for behind, when such a man as he went before. Hedinn at once made as though he would have set upon them, but yet each went their way. So Gunnar went on doing everything as Njal had laid it down for him, and when he came to Hauskuldstede he stayed there the night, and thence he went down the dale till he came to the next farm to Hrutstede. There he offered his wares for sale, and Hedinn fell at once upon the farmer. This was told to Hrut, and he sent for Hedinn, and Hedinn went at once to see Hrut, and had a good welcome. Hrut seated him over against himself, and their talk went pretty much as Njal had guessed; but when they came to talk of Rangrival, and Hrut asked about the men there, Gunnar sung this stave—

Men in sooth are slow to find,—
So the people speak by stealth,
Often this hath reached my ears,—
All through Rangar's rolling vales.
Still I trow that Fiddle Mord,
Tried his hand in fight of yore;
Sure was never gold-bestower,
Such a man for might and wit.

Then Hrut said, "Thou art a skald, Hedinn. But hast thou never heard how things went between me and Mord?" Then Hedinn sung another stave—

Once I ween I heard the rumour,
How the Lord of rings bereft thee;
From thine arms earth's offspring tearing,
Trickful he and trustful thou.
Then the men, the buckler-bearers,
Begged the mighty gold-begetter,
Sharp sword oft of old he reddened,
Not to stand in strife with thee.

So they went on, till Hrut, in answer told him how the suit must be taken up, and recited the summons. Hedinn repeated it all wrong, and Hrut burst out laughing, and had no mistrust. Then he said, Hrut must summon once more, and Hrut did so. Then Hedinn repeated the summons a second time, and this time right, and called his companions to witness how he summoned Hrut in a suit which Unna Mord's daughter had made over to him with her plighted hand. At night he went to sleep like other men, but as soon as ever Hrut was sound asleep, they took their clothes and arms, and went out and came to their horses, and rode off across the river, and so up along the bank by Hiardarholt till the dale broke off among the hills, and so there they are upon the fells between Laxriverdale and Hawkdale, having got to a spot where no one could find them unless he had fallen on them by chance.

Hauskuld wakes up that night at Hauskuldstede, and roused all his household, "I will tell you my dream," he said. "I thought I saw a great bear go out of this house, and I knew at once this beast's match was not to be found; two cubs followed him, wishing well to the bear, and they all made for Hrutstede, and went into the house there. After that I woke. Now I wish to ask if any of you saw aught about yon tall man."

Then one man answered him—"I saw how a golden fringe and a bit of scarlet cloth peeped out at his arm, and on his right arm he had a ring of gold."

Hauskuld said—"This beast is no man's fetch, but Gunnar's of Lithend, and now methinks I see all about it. Up! let us ride to Hrutstede." And they did so. Hrut lay in his locked bed, and asks who have come there? Hauskuld tells who he is, and asked what guests might be there in the house.

"Only Huckster Hedinn is here," says Hrut.

"A broader man across the back, it will be, I fear," says Hauskuld, "I guess here must have been Gunnar of Lithend."

"Then there has been a pretty trial of cunning," says Hrut.

"What has happened?" says Hauskuld.

"I told him how to take up Unna's suit, and I summoned myself and he summoned after, and now he can use this first step in the suit, and it is right in law."

"There has, indeed, been a great falling off of wit on one side," said Hauskuld, "and Gunnar cannot have planned it all by himself; Njal must be at the bottom of this plot, for there is not his match for wit in all the land."

Now they look for Hedinn, but he is already off and away; after that they gathered folk, and looked for them three days, but could not find them. Gunnar rode south from the fell to Hawkdale and so east of Skard, and north to Holtbeaconheath, and so on until he got home.

CHAPTER XXIV. GUNNAR AND HRUT STRIVE AT THE THING.

Gunnar rode to the Althing, and Hrut and Hauskuld rode thither too with a very great company. Gunnar pursues his suit, and began by calling on his neighbours to bear witness, but Hrut and his brother had it in their minds to make an onslaught on him, but they mistrusted their strength.

Gunnar next went to the court of the men of Broadfirth, and bade Hrut listen to his oath and declaration of the cause of the suit, and to all the proofs which he was about to bring forward. After that he took his oath, and declared his case. After that he brought forward his witnesses of the summons, along with his witnesses that the suit had been handed over to him. All this time Njal was not at the court. Now Gunnar pursued his suit till he called on the defendant to reply. Then Hrut took witness, and said the suit was naught, and that there was a flaw in the pleading; he declared that it had broken down because Gunnar had failed to call those three witnesses which ought to have been brought before the court. The first, that which was taken before the marriage-bed, the second, before the man's door, the third, at the Hill of Laws. By this time Njal was come to the court and said the suit and pleading might still he kept alive if they chose to strive in that way.

"No," says Gunnar, "I will not have that; I will do the same to Hrut as he did to Mord my kinsman;—or, are those brothers Hrut and Hauskuld so near that they may hear my voice?"

"Hear it we can," says Hrut. "What dost thou wish?"

Gunnar said—"Now all men here present be ear-witnesses, that I challenge thee Hrut to single combat, and we shall fight to-day on the holm, which is here in Axewater. But if thou wilt not fight with me, then pay up all the money this very day."

After that Gunnar sung a stave—

Yes, so must it be, this morning—
Now my mind is full of fire—
Hrut with me on yonder island
Raises roar of helm and shield.
All that hear my words bear witness,
Warriors grasping Woden's guard,
Unless the wealthy wight down payeth
Dower of wife with flowing veil.

After that Gunnar went away from the court with all his followers. Hrut and Hauskuld went home too, and the suit was never pursued nor defended from that day forth. Hrut said, as soon as he got inside the booth, "This has never happened to me before, that any man has offered me combat and I have shunned it."

"Then thou must mean to fight," says Hauskuld, "but that shall not be if I have my way; for thou comest no nearer to Gunnar than Mord would have come to thee, and we had better both of us pay up the money to Gunnar."

After that the brothers asked the householders of their own country what they would lay down, and they one and all said they would lay down as much as Hrut wished.

"Let us go then," says Hauskuld, "to Gunner's booth, and pay down the money out of hand." That was told to Gunnar, and he went out into the doorway of the booth, and Hauskuld said—

"Now it is thine to take the money."

Gunnar said—

"Pay it down, then, for I am ready to take it."

So they paid down the money truly out of hand, and then Hauskuld said—"Enjoy it now, as thou hast gotten it." Then Gunnar sang another stave—

Men who wield the blade of battle
Hoarded wealth may well enjoy,
Guileless gotten this at least,
Golden meed I fearless take;
But if we for woman's quarrel,
Warriors born to brandish sword,
Glut the wolf with manly gore,
Worse the lot of both would be.

Hrut answered—"Ill will be thy meed for this."

"Be that as it may," says Gunnar.

Then Hauskuld and his brother went home to their booth, and he had much upon his mind, and said to Hrut—

"Will this unfairness of Gunnar's never be avenged?"

"Not so," says Hrut; "it will be avenged on him sure enough, but we shall have no share nor profit in that vengeance. And after all it is most likely that he will turn to our stock to seek for friends."

After that they left off speaking of the matter. Gunnar showed Njal the money, and he said—"The suit has gone off well."

"Ay," says Gunnar, "but it was all thy doing."

Now men rode home from the Thing, and Gunnar got very great honour from the suit. Gunnar handed over all the money to Unna, and would have none of it, but said he thought he ought to look for more help from her and her kin hereafter than from other men. She said, so it should be.

CHAPTER XXV. UNNA'S SECOND WEDDING.

There was a man named Valgard, he kept house at Hof by Rangrifer, he was the son of Jorund the Priest, and his brother was Wolf Aupriest. Those brothers, Wolf Aupriest, and Valgard the guileful, set off to woo Unna, and she gave herself away to Valgard without the advice of any of her kinsfolk. But Gunnar and Njal, and many others thought ill of that, for he was a cross-grained man and had few friends. They begot between them a son, whose name was Mord, and he is long in this story. When he was grown to man's estate, he worked ill to his kinsfolk, but worst of all to Gunnar. He was a crafty man in his temper, but spiteful in his counsels.

Now we will name Njal's sons. Skarphedinn was the eldest of them. He was a tall man in growth and strong withal; a good swordsman; he could swim like a seal, the swiftest-footed of men, and bold and dauntless; he had a great flow of words and quick utterance; a good skald too; but still for the most part he kept himself well in hand; his hair was dark brown, with crisp curly locks; he had good eyes; his features were sharp, and his face ashen pale, his nose turned up and his front teeth stuck out, and his mouth was very ugly. Still he was the most soldier-like of men.

Grim was the name of Njal's second son. He was fair of face and wore his hair long. His hair was dark, and he was comelier to look on than Skarphedinn. A tall strong man.

Helgi was the name of Njal's third son. He too was fair of face and had fine hair. He was a strong man and well-skilled in arms. He was a man of sense and knew well how to behave. They were all unwedded at that time, Njal's sons.

Hauskuld was the fourth of Njal's sons. He was base-born. His mother was Rodny, and she was Hauskuld's daughter, the sister of Ingialld of the Springs.

Njal asked Skarphedinn one day if he would take to himself a wife. He bade his father settle the matter. Then Njal asked for his hand Thorhilda, the daughter of Ranvir of Thorolfssfell,

and that was why they had another homestead there after that. Skarphedinn got Thorhilda, but he stayed still with his father to the end. Grim wooed Astrid of Deepback; she was a widow and very wealthy. Grim got her to wife, and yet lived on with Njal.

CHAPTER XXVI. OF ASGRIM AND HIS CHILDREN.

There was a man named Asgrim. He was Ellidagrim's son. The brother of Asgrim Ellidagrim's son was Sigfus.

Asgrim had two sons, and both of them were named Thorhall. They were both hopeful men. Grim was the name of another of Asgrim's sons, and Thorhalla was his daughter's name. She was the fairest of women, and well behaved.

Njal came to talk with his son Helgi, and said, "I have thought of a match for thee, if thou wilt follow my advice."

"That I will surely," says he, "for I know that thou both meanest me well, and canst do well for me; but whither hast thou turned thine eyes?"

"We will go and woo Asgrim Ellidagrim's son's daughter, for that is the best choice we can make."

CHAPTER XXVII. HELGI NJAL'S SON'S WOOING.

A little after they rode out across Thurso water, and fared till they came into Tongue. Asgrim was at home, and gave them a hearty welcome; and they were there that night. Next morning they began to talk, and then Njal raised the question of the wooing, and asked for Thorhalla for his son Helgi's hand. Asgrim answered that well, and said there were no men with whom he would be more willing to make this bargain than with them. They fell a-talking then about terms, and the end of it was that Asgrim betrothed his daughter to Helgi, and the bridal day was named. Gunnar was at that feast, and many other of the best men. After the feast Njal offered to foster in his house Thorhall, Asgrim's son, and he was with Njal long after. He loved Njal more than his own father. Njal taught him law, so that he became the greatest lawyer in Iceland in those days.

CHAPTER XXVIII. HALLVARD COMES OUT TO ICELAND.

There came a ship out from Norway, and ran into Arnbael's Oyce, and the master of the ship was Hallvard, the white, a man from the Bay. He went to stay at Lithend, and was with Gunnar that winter, and was always asking him to fare abroad with him. Gunnar spoke little about it, but yet said more unlikely things might happen; and about spring he went over to Bergthorskknoll to find out from Njal whether he thought it a wise step in him to go abroad.

"I think it is wise," says Njal; "they will think thee there an honourable man, as thou art."

"Wilt thou perhaps take my goods into thy keeping while I am away, for I wish my brother Kolskegg to fare with me; but I would that thou shouldst see after my household along with my mother."

"I will not throw anything in the way of that," says Njal; "lean on me in this thing as much as thou likest."

"Good go with thee for thy words," says Gunnar, and he rides then home.

The Easterling [the Norseman Hallvard] fell again to talk with Gunnar that he should fare abroad. Gunnar asked if he had ever sailed to other lands? He said he had sailed to every one of them that lay between Norway and Russia, and so, too, I have sailed to Biarmaland.

"Wilt thou sail with me eastward ho?" says Gunnar.

"That I will of a surety," says he.

Then Gunnar made up his mind to sail abroad with him. Njal took all Gunnar's goods into his keeping.

CHAPTER XXIX. GUNNAR GOES ABROAD.

So Gunnar fared abroad, and Kolskegg with him. They sailed first to Tönsberg, and were there that winter. There had then been a shift of rulers in Norway, Harold Grayfell was then dead, and so was Gunnhilda. Earl Hacon the Bad, Sigurd's son, Hacon's son, Gritgarth's son, then ruled the realm. The mother of Hacon was Bergliot, the daughter of Earl Thorir. Her mother was Olof harvest-heal. She was Harold Fair-hair's daughter.

Hallvard asks Gunnar if he would make up his mind to go to Earl Hacon?

"No; I will not do that," says Gunnar. "Hast thou ever a long-ship?"

"I have two," he says.

"Then I would that we two went on warfare; and let us get men to go with us."

"I will do that," says Hallvard.

After that they went to the Bay, and took with them two ships, and fitted them out thence. They had good choice of men, for much praise was said of Gunnar.

"Whither wilt thou first fare?" says Gunnar.

"I wish to go south-east to Hisingen, to see my kinsman Oliver," says Hallvard.

"What dost thou want of him?" says Gunnar.

He answered—"He is a fine brave fellow, and he will be sure to get us some more strength for our voyage."

"Then let us go thither," says Gunnar.

So, as soon as they were 'boun,' they held on east to Hisingen, and had there a hearty welcome. Gunnar had only been there a short time ere Oliver made much of him. Oliver asks about his voyage, and Hallvard says that Gunnar wishes to go a-warfaring to gather goods for himself.

"There's no use thinking of that," says Oliver, "when ye have no force."

"Well," says Hallvard, "then you may add to it."

"So I do mean to strengthen Gunnar somewhat," says Oliver; "and though thou reckonest thyself my kith and kin, I think there is more good in him."

"What force, now, wilt thou add to ours?" he asks.

"Two long-ships, one with twenty, and the other with thirty seats for rowers."

"Who shall man them?" asks Hallvard.

"I will man one of them with my own house-carles, and the freemen around shall man the other. But still I have found out that strife has come into the river, and I know not whether ye two will be able to get away; for *they* are in the river."

"Who?" says Hallvard.

"Brothers twain," says Oliver; "one's name is Vandil and the other's Karli, sons of Sjolf the Old, east away out of Gothland."

Hallvard told Gunnar that Oliver had added some ships to theirs, and Gunnar was glad at that. They busked them for their voyage thence, till they were "all-boun." Then Gunnar and Hallvard went before Oliver, and thanked him; he bade them fare warily for the sake of those brothers.

CHAPTER XXX. GUNNAR GOES A-SEA-ROVING.

So Gunnar held on out of the river, and he and Kolskegg were both on board one ship. But Hallvard was on board another. Now, they see the ships before them, and then Gunnar spoke, and said—

"Let us be ready for anything if they turn towards us! but else let us have nothing to do with them."

So they did that, and made all ready on board their ships. The others patted their ships asunder, and made a fareway between the ships. Gunnar fared straight on between the ships, but Vandil caught up a grappling-iron, and cast it between their ships and Gunnar's ship, and began at once to drag it towards him.

Oliver had given Gunnar a good sword; Gunnar now drew it, and had not yet put on his helm. He leapt at once on the forecastle of Vandil's ship, and gave one man his death-blow. Karli ran his ship alongside the other side of Gunnar's ship, and hurled a spear

athwart the deck, and aimed at him about the waist. Gunnar sees this, and turned him about so quickly, that no eye could follow him, and caught the spear with his left hand, and hurled it back at Karli's ship, and that man got his death who stood before it. Kolskegg snatched up a grapnel and casts it at Karli's ship, and the fluke fell inside the hold, and went out through one of the planks, and in rushed the coal-blue sea, and all the men sprang on board other ships.

Now Gunnar leapt back to his own ship, and then Hallvard came up, and now a great battle arose. They saw now that their leader was unflinching, and every man did as well as he could. Sometimes Gunnar smote with the sword, and sometimes he hurled the spear, and many a man had his bane at his hand. Kolskegg backed him well. As for Karli, he hastened in a ship to his brother Vandil, and thence they fought that day. During the day Kolskegg took a rest on Gunnar's ship, and Gunnar sees that. Then he sung a song—

For the eagle ravine-eager,
Raven of my race, to-day
Better surely hast thou catered,
Lord of gold, than for thyself;
Here the morn came greedy ravens,
Many a rill of wolf to sup,
But thee burning thirst down-beareth,
Prince of battle's Parliament!

After that Kolskegg took a beaker full of mead, and drank it off and went on fighting afterwards; and so it came about that those brothers sprang up on the ship of Vandil and his brother, and Kolskegg went on one side, and Gunnar on the other. Against Gunnar came Vandil, and smote at once at him with his sword, and the blow fell on his shield. Gunnar gave the shield a twist as the sword pierced it, and broke it short off at the hilt. Then Gunnar smote back at Vandil, and three swords seemed to be aloft, and Vandil could not see how to shun the blow. Then Gunnar cut both his legs from under him, and at the same time Kolskegg ran Karli through with a spear. After that they took great war spoil.

Thence they held on south to Denmark, and thence east to Smoland, and had victory wherever they went. They did not come back in autumn. The next summer they held on to Reval, and fell in there with sea-rovers, and fought at once, and won the fight. After that they steered east to Osel, and lay there somewhere under a ness. There they saw a man coming down from the ness above them; Gunnar went on shore to meet the man, and they had a talk. Gunnar asked him his name, and he said it was Tofi. Gunnar asked again what he wanted.

"Thee I want to see," says the man. "Two warships lie on the other side under the ness, and I will tell thee who command them: two brothers are the captains—one's name is Hallgrim, and the other's Kolskegg. I know them to be mighty men of war; and I know too that they have such good weapons that the like are not to be had. Hallgrim has a bill which he had made by seething-spells; and this is what the spells say, that no weapon shall give him his death-blow save that bill. That thing follows it too that it is known at once when a man is to be slain with that bill, for something sings in it so loudly that it may be heard a long way off—such a strong nature has that bill in it."

Then Gunnar sang a song—

Soon shall I that spearhead seize,
And the bold sea-rover slay,
Him whose blows on headpiece ring,
Heaper up of piles of dead.
Then on Endil's courser bounding,
O'er the sea-depths I will ride,
While the wretch who spells abuseth,
Life shall lose in Sigar's storm.

"Kolskegg has a short sword; that is also the best of weapons. Force, too, they have—a third more than ye. They have also much goods, and have stowed them away on land, and I know clearly where they are. But they have sent a spy-ship off the ness, and they know all about you. Now they are getting themselves ready as fast as they can; and as soon as they are 'boun,' they mean to run out against you. Now you have either to row away at once, or to busk yourselves as quickly as ye can; but if ye win the day, then I will lead you to all their store of goods."

Gunnar gave him a golden finger-ring, and went afterwards to his men and told them that war-ships lay on the other side of the ness, "and they know all about us; so let us take to our arms, and busk us well, for now there is gain to be got."

Then they busked them; and just when they were boun they see ships coming up to them. And now a fight sprung up between them, and they fought long, and many men fell. Gunnar slew many a man. Hallgrim and his men leapt on board Gunnar's ship, Gunnar turns to meet him, and Hallgrim thrust at him with his bill. There was a boom athwart the ship, and Gunnar leapt nimbly back over it, Gunnar's shield was just before the boom, and Hallgrim thrust his bill into it, and through it, and so on into the boom. Gunnar cut at Hallgrim's arm hard, and lamed the forearm, but the sword would not bite. Then down fell the bill, and Gunnar seized the bill, and thrust Hallgrim through, and then sang a song—

Slain is he who spoiled the people,
Lashing them with flashing steel:
Heard have I how Hallgrim's magic
Helm-rod forged in foreign land;
All men know, of heart-strings doughty,
How this bill hath come to me,
Deft in fight, the wolf's dear feeder.
Death alone us two shall part.

And that vow Gunnar kept, in that he bore the bill while he lived. Those namesakes [the two Kolskeggs] fought together, and it was a near thing which would get the better of it. Then Gunnar came up, and gave the other Kolskegg his death-blow. After that the sea-rovers begged for mercy. Gunnar let them have that choice, and he let them also count the slain, and take the goods which the dead men owned, but he gave the others whom he spared their arms and their clothing, and bade them be off to the lands that fostered them. So they went off and Gunnar took all the goods that were left behind.

Tofi came to Gunnar after the battle, and offered to lead him to that store of goods which the sea-rovers had stowed away, and said that it was both better and larger than that which they had already got.

Gunnar said he was willing to go, and so he went ashore, and Tofi before him, to a wood, and Gunnar behind him. They came to a place where a great heap of wood was piled together. Tofi says the goods were under there, then they tossed off the wood, and found under it both gold and silver, clothes and good weapons. They bore those goods to the ships, and Gunnar asks Tofi in what way he wished him to repay him.

Tofi answered, "I am a Dansk man by race, and I wish thou wouldst bring me to my kinsfolk."

Gunnar asks why he was there away east?

"I was taken by sea-rovers," says Tofi, "and they put me on land here in Osel, and here I have been ever since."

CHAPTER XXXI. GUNNAR GOES TO KING HAROLD GORM'S SON AND EARL HACON.

Gunnar took Tofi on board, and said to Kolskegg and Hallvard, "Now we will hold our course for the north lands."

They were well pleased at that, and bade him have his way. So Gunnar sailed from the east with much goods. He had ten ships, and ran in with them to Heidarby in Denmark. King Harold Gorm's son was there up the country, and he was told about Gunnar, and how too that there was no man his match in all Iceland. He sent men to him to ask him to come to him, and Gunnar went at once to see the king, and the king made him a hearty welcome, and sat him down next to himself. Gunnar was there half a month. The king made himself sport by letting Gunnar prove himself in divers feats of strength against his men, and there were none that were his match even in one feat.

Then the king said to Gunnar, "It seems to me as though thy peer is not to be found far or near," and the king offered to get Gunnar a wife, and to raise him to great power if he would settle down there.

Gunnar thanked the king for his offer and said—"I will first of all sail back to Iceland to see my friends and kinsfolk."

"Then thou wilt never come back to us," says the king.

"Fate will settle that, lord," says Gunnar.

Gunnar gave the king a good long-ship, and much goods besides, and the king gave him a robe of honour, and golden-seamed gloves, and a fillet with a knot of gold on it, and a Russian hat.

Then Gunnar fared north to Hisingen. Oliver welcomed him with both hands, and he gave back to Oliver his ships, with their lading, and said that was his share of the spoil. Oliver took the goods, and said Gunnar was a good man and true, and bade him stay with him some while. Hallvard asked Gunnar if he had a mind to go to see Earl Hacon. Gunnar said that was near his heart, "for now I am somewhat proved, but then I was not tried at all when thou badest me do this before."

After that they fared north to Drontheim to see Earl Hacon, and he gave Gunnar a hearty welcome, and bade him stay with him that winter, and Gunnar took that offer, and every man thought him a man of great worth. At Yule the Earl gave him a gold ring.

Gunnar set his heart on Bergliota, the Earl's kinswoman, and it was often to be seen from the Earl's way, that he would have given her to him to wife if Gunnar had said anything about that.

CHAPTER XXXII. GUNNAR COMES OUT TO ICELAND.

When the spring came, the Earl asks Gunnar what course he meant to take. He said he would go to Iceland. The Earl said that had been a bad year for grain, "and there will be little sailing out to Iceland, but still thou shalt have meal and timber both in thy ship."

Gunnar fitted out his ship as early as he could, and Hallvard fared out with him and Kolskegg. They came out early in the summer, and made Arnbael's Oyce before the Thing met.

Gunnar rode home from the ship, but got men to strip her and lay her up. But when they came home all men were glad to see them. They were blithe and merry to their household, nor had their haughtiness grown while they were away.

Gunnar asks if Njal were at home; and he was told that he was at home; then he let them saddle his horse, and those brothers rode over to Bergthorsknoll.

Njal was glad at their coming, and begged them to stay there that night, and Gunnar told him of his voyages.

Njal said he was a man of the greatest mark, "and thou hast been much proved; but still thou wilt be more tried hereafter; for many will envy thee."

"With all men I would wish to stand well," says Gunnar.

"Much bad will happen," says Njal, "and thou wilt always have some quarrel to ward off."

"So be it, then," says Gunnar, "so that I have a good ground on my side."

"So will it be too," says Njal, "if thou hast not to smart for others."

Njal asked Gunnar if he would ride to the Thing. Gunnar said he was going to ride thither, and asks Njal whether he were going to ride; but he said he would not ride thither, "and if I had my will thou wouldst do the like."

Gunnar rode home, and gave Njal good gifts, and thanked him for the care he had taken of his goods, Kolskegg urged him on much to ride to the Thing, saying, "There thy honour will grow, for many will flock to see thee there."

"That has been little to my mind," says Gunnar, "to make a show of myself; but I think it good and right to meet good and worthy men."

Hallvard by this time was also come thither, and offered to ride to the Thing with them.

CHAPTER XXXIII. GUNNAR'S WOOING.

So Gunnar rode, and they all rode. But when they came to the Thing they were so well arrayed that none could match them in bravery; and men came out of every booth to wonder at them. Gunnar rode to the booths of the men of Rangriver, and was there

with his kinsmen. Many men came to see Gunnar, and ask tidings of him; and he was easy and merry to all men, and told them all they wished to hear.

It happened one day that Gunnar went away from the Hill of Laws, and passed by the booths of the men from Mossfell; then he saw a woman coming to meet him, and she was in goodly attire; but when they met she spoke to Gunnar at once. He took her greeting well, and asks what woman she might be. She told him her name was Hallgerda, and said she was Hauskuld's daughter, Dalakoll's son. She spoke up boldly to him, and bade him tell her of his voyages; but he said he would not gainsay her a talk. Then they sat them down and talked. She was so clad that she had on a red kirtle, and had thrown over her a scarlet cloak trimmed with needlework down to the waist. Her hair came down to her bosom, and was both fair and full. Gunnar was clad in the scarlet clothes which King Harold Gorm's son had given him; he had also the gold ring on his arm which Earl Hacon had given him.

So they talked long out loud, and at last it came about that he asked whether she were unmarried. She said, so it was, "and there are not many who would run the risk of that."

"Thinkest thou none good enough for thee?"

"Not that," she says, "but I am said to be hard to please in husbands."

"How wouldst thou answer were I to ask for thee?"

"That can not be in thy mind," she says.

"It is though," says he.

"If thou hast any mind that way, go and see my father."

After that they broke off their talk.

Gunnar went straightway to the Dalesmen's booths, and met a man outside the doorway, and asks whether Hauskuld were inside the booth?

The man says that he was. Then Gunnar went in, and Hauskuld and Hrut made him welcome. He sat down between them, and no one could find out from their talk that there had ever been any misunderstanding between them. At last Gunnar's speech turned thither; how these brothers would answer if he asked for Hallgerda?

"Well," says Hauskuld, "if that is indeed thy mind."

Gunnar says that he is in earnest, "but we so parted last time, that many would think it unlikely that we should ever be bound together."

"How thinkest thou, kinsman Hrut?" says Hauskuld.

Hrut answered, "Methinks this is no even match."

"How dost thou make that out?" says Gunnar.

Hrut spoke—"In this wise will I answer thee about this matter, as is the very truth. Thou art a brisk brave man, well to do, and unblemished; but she is much mixed up with ill report, and I will not cheat thee in anything."

"Good go with thee for thy words," says Gunnar, "but still I shall hold that for true, that the old feud weighs with ye, if ye will not let me make this match."

"Not so," says Hrut, "'tis more because I see that thou art unable to help thyself; but though we make no bargain, we would still be thy friends."

"I have talked to her about it," says Gunnar, "and it is not far from her mind."

Hrut says—"I know that you have both set your hearts on this match; and, besides, ye two are those who run the most risk as to how it turns out."

Hrut told Gunnar unasked all about Hallgerda's temper, and Gunnar at first thought that there was more than enough that was wanting; but at last it came about that they struck a bargain.

Then Hallgerda was sent for, and they talked over the business when she was by, and now, as before, they made her betroth herself. The bridal feast was to be at Lithend, and at first they were to set about it secretly; but the end after all was that every one knew of it.

Gunnar rode home from the Thing, and came to Bergthorsknoll, and told Njal of the bargain he had made. He took it heavily.

Gunnar asks Njal why he thought this so unwise?

"Because from her," says Njal, "will arise all kind of ill if she comes hither east."

"Never shall she spoil our friendship," says Gunnar.

"Ah! but yet that may come very near," says Njal; "and, besides, thou wilt have always to make atonement for her."

Gunnar asked Njal to the wedding, and all those as well whom he wished should be at it from Njal's house.

Njal promised to go; and after that Gunnar rode home, and then rode about the district to bid men to his wedding.

CHAPTER XXXIV. OF THRAIN SIGFUS' SON.

There was a man named Thrain, he was the son of Sigfus, the son of Sighvat the Red. He kept house at Gritwater on Fleetlithe. He was Gunnar's kinsman, and a man of great mark. He had to wife Thorhilda Skaldwife; she had a sharp tongue of her own, and was giving to jeering. Thrain loved her little. He and his wife were bidden to the wedding, and she and Berghthora, Skarphedinn's daughter, Njal's wife, waited on the guests with meat and drink.

Kettle was the name of the second son of Sigfus; he kept house in the Mark, east of Markfleet. He had to wife Thorgerda, Njal's daughter. Thorkell was the name of the third son of Sigfus; the fourth's name was Mord; the fifth's Lambi; the sixth's Sigmund; the seventh's Sigurd. These were all Gunnar's kinsmen, and great champions. Gunnar bade them all to the wedding.

Gunnar had also bidden Valgard the guileful, and Wolf Auri-priest, and their sons Runolf and Mord.

Hauskuld and Hrut came to the wedding with a very great company, and the sons of Hauskuld, Torleik, and Olof, were there; the bride, too, came along with them, and her daughter Thorgerda came also, and she was one of the fairest of women; she was then fourteen winters old. Many other women were with her, and besides there were Thorkatla Asgrim Ellidagrim's son's daughter, and Njal's two daughters, Thorgerda and Helga.

Gunnar had already many guests to meet them, and he thus arranged his men. He sat on the middle of the bench, and on the inside, away from him, Thrain Sigfus' son, then Wolf Auri-priest, then Valgard the guileful, then Mord and Runolf, then the other sons of Sigfus, Lambi sat outermost of them.

Next to Gunnar on the outside, away from him, sat Njal, then Skarphedinn, then Helgi, then Grim, then Hauskuld Njal's son, then Hafr the Wise, then Ingialld from the Springs, then the sons of Thorir from Holt away east. Thorir would sit outermost of the men of mark, for every one was pleased with the seat he got.

Hauskuld, the bride's father, sat on the middle of the bench over against Gunnar, but his sons sat on the inside away from him; Hrut sat on the outside away from Hauskuld, but it is not said how the others were placed. The bride sat in the middle of the cross-bench on the dais; but on one hand of her sat her daughter Thorgerda, and on the other Thorkatla Asgrim Ellidagrim's son's daughter.

Thorhilda went about waiting on the guests, and Berghthora bore the meat on the board.

Now Thrain Sigfus' son kept staring at Thorgerda Glum's daughter; his wife Thorhilda saw this, and she got wroth, and made a couplet upon him.

"Thrain," she says,

"Gaping mouths are no wise good,
Goggle eyne are in thy head,"

He rose at once up from the board, and said he would put Thorhilda away, "I will not bear her jibes and jeers any longer;" and he was so quarrelsome about this, that he would not be at the feast unless she were driven away. And so it was, that she went away; and now each man sat in his place, and they drank and were glad.

Then Thrain began to speak—"I will not whisper about that which is in my mind. This I will ask thee, Hauskuld Dalakoll's son, wilt thou give me to wife Thorgerda, thy kinswoman?"

"I do not know that," says Hauskuld; "methinks thou art ill parted from the one thou hadst before. But what kind of man is he, Gunnar?"

Gunnar answers—"I will not say aught about the man, because he is near of kin; but say thou about him, Njal," says Gunnar, "for all men will believe it."

Njal spoke, and said—"That is to be said of this man, that the man is well to do for wealth, and a proper man in all things. A man, too, of the greatest mark; so that ye may well make this match with him."

Then Hauskuld spoke—"What thinkest thou we ought to do, kinsman Hrut?"

"Thou mayst make the match, because it is an even one for her," says Hrut.

Then they talk about the terms of the bargain, and are soon of one mind on all points.

Then Gunnar stands up, and Thrain too, and they go to the cross-bench. Gunnar asked that mother and daughter whether they would say yes to this bargain. They said they would find no fault with it, and Hallgerda betrothed her daughter. Then the places of the women were shifted again, and now Thorhalla sate between the brides. And now the feast sped on well, and when it was over, Hauskuld and his company ride west, but the men of Rangriver rode to their own abode. Gunnar gave many men gifts, and that made him much liked.

Hallgerda took the housekeeping under her, and stood up for her rights in word and deed. Thorgerda took to housekeeping at Gritwater, and was a good housewife.

CHAPTER XXXV. THE VISIT TO BERGTHORSKNOLL.

Now it was the custom between Gunnar and Njal, that each made the other a feast, winter and winter about, for friendship's sake; and it was Gunnar's turn to go to feast at Njal's. So Gunnar and Hallgerda set off for Bergthorsknoll, and when they got there Helgi and his wife were not at home. Njal gave Gunnar and his wife a hearty welcome, and when they had been there a little while, Helgi came home with Thorhalla his wife. Then Bergthora went up to the cross-bench, and Thorhalla with her, and Bergthora said to Hallgerda—

"Thou shalt give place to this woman."

She answered—"To no one will I give place, for I will not be driven into the corner for any one."

"I shall rule here," said Bergthora, After that Thorhalla sat down, and Bergthora went round the table with water to wash the guests' hands. Then Hallgerda took hold of Bergthora's hand, and said—

"There's not much to choose, though, between you two. Thou hast hangnails on every finger, and Njal is beardless."

"That's true," says Bergthora, "yet neither of us finds fault with the other for it; but Thorwald, thy husband, was not beardless, and yet thou plottedst his death."

Then Hallgerda said—"It stands me in little stead to have the bravest man in Iceland if thou dost not avenge this, Gunnar!"

He sprang up and strode across away from the board, and said—"Home I will go, and it were more seemly that thou shouldest wrangle with those of thine own household, and not under other men's roofs; but as for Njal, I am his debtor for much honour, and never will I be egged on by thee like a fool."

After that they set off home.

"Mind this, Bergthora," said Hallgerda, "that we shall meet again."

Bergthora said she should not be better off for that. Gunnar said nothing at all, but went home to Lithend, and was there at home all the winter. And now the summer was running on towards the Great Thing.

CHAPTER XXXVI. KOL SLEW SWART.

Gunnar rode away to the Thing, but before he rode from home he said to Hallgerda—"Be good now while I am away, and show none of thine ill temper in anything with which my friends have to do."

"The trolls take thy friends," says Hallgerda.

So Gunnar rode to the Thing, and saw it was not good to come to words with her. Njal rode to the Thing too, and all his sons with him.

Now it must be told of what tidings happened at home. Njal and Gunnar owned a wood in common at Redslip; they had not shared the wood, but each was wont to hew in it as he needed, and neither said a word to the other about that. Hallgerda's grievance's name was Kol; he had been with her long, and was one of the worst of men. There was a man named Swart; he was Njal's and Bergthora's house-carle; they were very fond of him. Now Bergthora told him that he must go up into Redslip and hew wood; but she said—"I will get men to draw home the wood."

He said he would do the work. She set him to win; and so he went up into Redslip, and was to be there a week.

Some gangrel men came to Lithend from the east across Markfleet, and said that Swart had been in Redslip, and hewn wood, and done a deal of work.

"So," says Hallgerda, "Bergthora must mean to rob me in many things, but I'll take care that he does not hew again."

Rannveig, Gunnar's mother, heard that, and said—"There have been good housewives before now, though they never set their hearts on manslaughter."

Now the night wore away, and early next morning Hallgerda came to speak to Kol, and said—"I have thought of some work for thee"; and with that she put weapons into his hands, and went on to say—"Fare thou to Redslip; there wilt thou find Swart."

"What shall I do to him?" he says.

"Askest thou that when thou art the worst of men?" she says.

"Thou shalt kill him."

"I can get that done," he says, "but 'tis more likely that I shall lose my own life for it."

"Everything grows big in thy eyes," she says, "and thou behavest ill to say this after I have spoken up for thee in everything. I must get another man to do this if thou darest not."

He took the axe, and was very wroth, and takes a horse that Gunnar owned, and rides now till he comes east of Markfleet. There he got off and bided in the wood, till they had carried down the firewood, and Swart was left alone behind. Then Kol sprang on him, and said—"More folk can hew great strokes than thou alone"; and so he laid the axe on his head, and smote him his death-blow, and rides home afterwards, and tells Hallgerda of the slaying.

She said—"I shall take such good care of thee, that no harm shall come to thee."

"May be so," says he, "but I dreamt all the other way as I slept ere I did the deed."

Now they come up into the wood, and find Swart slain, and bear him home. Hallgerda sent a man to Gunnar at the Thing to tell him of the slaying. Gunnar said no hard words at first of Hallgerda to the messenger, and men knew not at first whether he thought well or ill of it. A little after he stood up, and bade his men go with him: they did so, and fared to Njal's booth. Gunnar sent a man to fetch Njal, and begged him to come out. Njal went out at once, and he and Gunnar fell a-talking, and Gunnar said—

"I have to tell thee of the slaying of a man, and my wife and my grievance Kol were those who did it; but Swart, thy house-carle, fell before them."

Njal held his peace while he told him the whole story. Then Njal spoke—

"Thou must take heed not to let her have her way in everything."

Gunnar said—"Thou thyself shall settle the terms."

Njal spoke again—"Twil be hard work for thee to atone for all Hallgerda's mischief; and somewhere else there will be a broader trail to follow than this which we two now have a share in, and yet, even here there will be much awaiting before all be well; and herein we shall need to bear in mind the friendly words that passed between us of old; and something tells me that thou wilt come well out of it, but still thou wilt be sore tried."

Then Njal took the award into his own hands from Gunnar, and said—

"I will not push this matter to the uttermost; thou shalt pay twelve ounces of silver; but I will add this to my award, that if anything happens from our homestead about which thou hast to utter an award, thou wilt not be less easy in thy terms."

Gunnar paid up the money out of hand, and rode home afterwards. Njal, too, came home from the Thing, and his sons. Bergthora saw the money, and said—

"This is very justly settled; but even as much money shall be paid for Kol as time goes on."

Gunnar came home from the Thing and blamed Hallgerda. She said, better men lay unatoned in many places, Gunnar said, she might have her way in beginning a quarrel, "but how the matter is to be settled rests with me."

Hallgerda was for ever chattering of Swart's slaying, but Bergthora liked that ill. Once Njal and her sons went up to Thorolfsfell to see about the housekeeping there, but that self-same day this thing happened when Bergthora was out of doors: she sees a man ride up to the house on a black horse. She stayed there and did not go in, for she did not know the man. That man had a spear in his hand, and was girded with a short sword. She asked this man his name.

"Atli is my name," says he.

She asked whence he came.

"I am an Eastfirther," he says.

"Whither shalt thou go?" she says.

"I am a homeless man," says he, "and I thought to see Njal and Skarphedinn, and know if they would take me in."

"What work is handiest to thee?" says she.

"I am a man used to field-work," he says, "and many things else come very handy to me; but I will not hide from thee that I am a man of hard temper and it has been many a man's lot before now to bind up wounds at my hand."

"I do not blame thee," she says, "though thou art no milksop."

Atli said—"Hast thou any voice in things here?"

"I am Njal's wife," she says, "and I have as much to say to our housefolk as he."

"Wilt thou take me in then?" says he.

"I will give thee thy choice of that," says she. "If thou wilt do all the work that I set before thee, and that though I wish to send thee where a man's life is at stake."

"Thou must have so many men at thy beck," says he, "that thou wilt not need me for such work"

"That I will settle as I please," she says.

"We will strike a bargain on these terms," says he.

Then she took him into the household. Njal and his sons came home and asked Bergthora what man that might be?

"He is thy house-carle," she says, "and I took him in." Then she went on to say he was no sluggard at work.

"He will be a great worker enough, I daresay," says Njal, "but I do not know whether he will be such a good worker."

Skarphedinn was good to Atli.

Njal and his sons ride to the Thing in the course of the summer; Gunnar was also at the Thing.

Njal took out a purse of money.

"What money is that, father?"

"Here is the money that Gunnar paid me for our house-carle last summer"

"That will come to stand thee in some stead," says Skarphedinn, and smiled as he spoke.

CHAPTER XXXVII. THE SLAYING OF KOL, WHOM ATLI SLEW.

Now we must take up the story, and say that Atli asked Bergthora what work he should do that day.

"I have thought of some work for thee," she says; "thou shalt go and look for Kol until thou find him; for now shalt thou slay him this very day, if thou wilt do my will."

"This work is well fitted," says Atli, "for each of us two are bad fellows; but still I will so lay myself out for him that one or other of us shall die."

"Well mayest thou fare," she says, "and thou shalt not do this deed for nothing."

He took his weapons and his horse, and rode up to Fleetlithe, and there met men who were coming down from Lithend. They were at home east in the Mark. They asked Atli whither he meant to go? He said he was riding to look for an old jade. They said

that was a small errand for such a workman, "but still 'twould be better to ask those who have been about last night."

"Who are they?" says he.

"Killing-Kol," say they, "Hallgerda's house-carle, fared from the fold just now, and has been awake all night."

"I do not know whether I dare to meet him," says Atli, "he is bad-tempered, and may be that I shall let another's wound be my warning."

"Thou bearest that look beneath the brows as though thou wert no coward," they said, and showed him where Kol was.

Then he spurred his horse and rides fast, and when he meets Kol, Atli said to him—

"Go the pack-saddle bands well?"

"That's no business of thine, worthless fellow, nor of any one else whence thou comest."

Atli said—"Thou hast something behind that is earnest work, but that is to die."

After that Atli thrust at him with his spear, and struck him about his middle. Kol swept at him with his axe, but missed him, and fell off his horse, and died at once.

Atli rode till he met some of Hallgerda's workmen, and said, "Go ye up to the horse yonder, and look to Kol, for he has fallen off, and is dead."

"Hast thou slain him?" say they.

"Well, 'twill seem to Hallgerda as though he has not fallen by his own hand."

After that Atli rode home and told Bergthora; she thanked him for this deed, and for the words which he had spoken about it.

"I do not know," says he, "what Njal will think of this."

"He will take it well upon his hands," she says, "and I will tell thee one thing as a token of it, that he has earned away with him to the Thing the price of that thrall which we took last spring, and that money will now serve for Kol; but though peace be made thou must still beware of thyself, for Hallgerda will keep no peace."

"Wilt thou send at all a man to Njal to tell him of the slaying?"

"I will not," she says, "I should like it better that Kol were unatoned."

Then they stopped talking about it.

Hallgerda was told of Kol's slaying, and of the words that Atli had said. She said Atli should be paid off for them. She sent a man to the Thing to tell Gunnar of Kol's slaying; he answered little or nothing, and sent a man to tell Njal. He too made no answer, but Skarphedinn said—

"Thralls are men of more mettle than of yore; they used to fly at each other and fight, and no one thought much harm of that; but now they will do naught but kill," and as he said this he smiled.

Njal pulled down the purse of money which hung up in the booth, and went out; his sons went with him to Gunnar's booth.

Skarphedinn said to a man who was in the doorway of the booth—

"Say thou to Gunnar that my father wants to see him."

He did so, and Gunnar went out at once and gave Njal a hearty welcome. After that they began to talk.

"Tis ill done," says Njal, "that my housewife should have broken the peace, and let thy house-carle be slain."

"She shall not have blame for that," says Gunnar.

"Settle the award thyself," says Njal.

"So I will do," say Gunnar, "and I value those two men at an even price, Swart and Kol. Thou shalt pay me twelve ounces in silver."

Njal took the purse of money and handed it to Gunnar. Gunnar knew the money, and saw it was the same that he had paid Njal. Njal went away to his booth, and they were just as good friends as before. When Njal came home, he blamed Bergthora; but she said she would never give way to Hallgerda. Hallgerda was very cross with Gunnar, because he had made peace for Kol's slaying, Gunnar told her he would never break with Njal or his sons, and she flew into a great rage; but Gunnar took no heed of that, and so they sat for that year, and nothing noteworthy happened.

CHAPTER XXXVIII. THE KILLING OF ATLI THE THRALL.

Next spring Njal said to Atli—"I wish that thou wouldst change thy abode to the east firths, so that Hallgerda may not put an end to thy life."

"I am not afraid of that," says Atli, "and I will willingly stay at home if I have the choice."

"Still that is less wise," says Njal.

"I think it better to lose my life in thy house than to change my master; but this I will beg of thee, if I am slain, that a thrall's price shall not be paid for me."

"Thou shalt be atoned for as a free man; but perhaps Bergthora will make thee a promise which she will fulfil, that revenge, man for man, shall be taken for thee."

Then he made up his mind to be a hired servant there.

Now it must be told of Hallgerda that she sent a man west to Bearfirth, to fetch Brynjolf the Unruly, her kinsman. He was a base son of Swan, and he was one of the worst of men. Gunnar knew nothing about it. Hallgerda said he was well fitted to be a grieve. So Brynjolf came from the west, and Gunnar asked what he was to do there? He said he was going to stay there.

"Thou wilt not better our household," says Gunnar, "after what has been told me of thee, but I will not turn away any of Hallgerda's kinsmen, whom she wishes to be with her."

Gunnar said little, but was not unkind to him, and so things went on till the Thing. Gunnar rides to the Thing and Kolskegg rides too, and when they came to the Thing they and Njal met, for he and his sons were at the Thing, and all went well with Gunnar and them.

Bergthora said to Atli—"Go thou up into Thorolfssfell and work there a week."

So he went up thither, and was there on the sly, and burnt charcoal in the wood.

Hallgerda said to Brynjolf—"I have been told Atli is not at home, and he must be winning work on Thorolfssfell."

"What thinkest thou likeliest that he is working at?" says he.

"At something in the wood," she says.

"What shall I do to him?" he asks.

"Thou shalt kill him," says she.

He was rather slow in answering her, and Hallgerda said—

"'Twould grow less in Thiostolf's eyes to kill Atli if he were alive."

"Thou shalt have no need to goad me on much more," he says, and then he seized his weapons, and takes his horse and mounts, and rides to Thorolfssfell. There he saw a great reek of coal smoke east of the homestead, so he rides thither, and gets off his horse and ties him up, but he goes where the smoke was thickest. Then he sees where the charcoal pit is, and a man stands by it. He saw that he had thrust his spear in the ground by him. Brynjolf goes along with the smoke right up to him, but he was eager at his work, and saw him not. Brynjolf gave him a stroke on the head with his axe, and he turned so quick round that Brynjolf loosed his hold of the axe, and Atli grasped the spear, and hurled it after him. Then Brynjolf cast himself down on the ground, but the spear flew away over him.

"Lucky for thee that I was not ready for thee," says Atli, "but now Hallgerda will be well pleased, for thou wilt tell her of my death; but it is a comfort to know that thou wilt have the same fate soon; but come now, take thy axe which has been here."

He answered him never a word, nor did he take the axe before he was dead. Then he rode up to the house on Thorolfssfell, and told of the slaying, and after that rode home and told Hallgerda. She sent men to Bergthorsknoll, and let them tell Bergthora, that now Kol's slaying was paid for.

After that Hallgerda sent a man to the Thing to tell Gunnar of Atli's killing.

Gunnar stood up, and Kolskegg with him, and Kolskegg said—"Unthrifty will Hallgerda's kinsmen be to thee."

Then they go to see Njal, and Gunnar said—

"I have to tell thee of Atli's killing." He told him also who slew him, and went on, "and now I will bid thee atonement for the deed, and thou shalt make the award thyself."

Njal said—"We two have always meant never to come to strife about anything; but still I cannot make him out a thrall."

Gunnar said that was all right, and stretched out his hand.

Njal named his witnesses, and they made peace on those terms. Skarphedinn said, "Hallgerda does not let our house-carles die of old age."

Gunnar said—"Thy mother will take care that blow goes for blow between the houses."

"Ay, ay," says Njal, "there will be enough of that work."

After that Njal fixed the price at a hundred in silver, but Gunnar paid it down at once. Many who stood by said that the award was high; Gunnar got wroth, and said that a full atonement was often paid for those who were no brisker men than Atli.

With that they rode home from the Thing.

Bergthora said to Njal when she saw the money—"Thou thinkest thou hast fulfilled thy promise, but now my promise is still behind."

"There is no need that thou shouldst fulfil it," says Njal.

"Nay," says she, "thou hast guessed it would be so; and so it shall be."

Hallgerda said to Gunnar—

"Hast thou paid a hundred in silver for Atli's slaying, and made him a free man?"

"He was free before," says Gunnar, "and besides, I will not make Njal's household outlaws who have forfeited their rights."

"There's not a pin to choose between you," she said, "for both of you are so blate."

"That's as things prove," says he.

Then Gunnar was for a long time very short with her, till she gave way to him; and now all was still for the rest of that year; in the spring Njal did not increase his household, and now men ride to the Thing about summer.

CHAPTER XXXIX. THE SLAYING OF BRYNJOLF THE UNRULY.

There was a man named Thord, he was surnamed Freedmanson. Sigtrygg was his father's name, and he had been the freedman of Asgerd, and he was drowned in Markfleet. That was why Thord was with Njal afterwards. He was a tall man and a strong, and he had fostered all Njal's sons. He had set his heart on Gudfinna Thorolf's daughter, Njal's kinswoman; she was housekeeper at home there, and was then with child.

Now Bergthora came to talk with Thord Freedmanson; she said—

"Thou shalt go to kill Brynjolf, Hallgerda's kinsman."

"I am no man-slayer," he says, "but still I will do what ever thou wilt."

"This is my will," she says.

After that he went up to Lithend, and made them call Hallgerda out, and asked where Brynjolf might be.

"What's thy will with him?" she says.

"I want him to tell me where he has hidden Atli's body; I have heard say that he has buried it badly."

She pointed to him, and said he was down yonder in Acre-tongue.

"Take heed," says Thord, "that the same thing does not befall him as befell Atli."

"Thou art no man-slayer," she says, "and so nought will come of it even if ye two do meet."

"Never have I seen man's blood, nor do I know how I should feel if I did," he says, and gallops out of the "town" and down to Acre-tongue.

Rannveig, Gunnar's mother, had heard their talk.

"Thou goadest his mind much, Hallgerda," she says, "but I think him a dauntless man, and that thy kinsman will find."

They met on the beaten way, Thord and Brynjolf; and Thord said—"Guard thee, Brynjolf, for I will do no dastard's deed by thee."

Brynjolf rode at Thord, and smote at him with his axe. He smote at him at the same time with his axe, and hewed in sunder the haft just above Brynjolf's hands, and then hewed at him at once a second time, and struck him on the collarbone, and the

blow went straight into his trunk. Then he fell from horseback, and was dead on the spot.

Thord met Hallgerda a herdsman, and gave out the slaying as done by his hand, and said where he lay, and bade him tell Hallgerda of the slaying. After that he rode home to Bergthorsknoll, and told Bergthora of the slaying, and other people too.

"Good luck go with thy hands," she said.

The herdsman told Hallgerda of the slaying; she was snappish at it, and said much ill would come of it, if she might have her way.

CHAPTER XL. GUNNAR AND NJAL MAKE PEACE ABOUT BRYNJOLF'S SLAYING.

Now these tidings come to the Thing, and Njal made them tell him the tale thrice, and then he said—

"More men now become man-slayers than I weened."

Skarphedinn spoke—"That man, though, must have been twice fey," he says, "who lost his life by our foster-father's hand, who has never seen man's blood. And many would think that we brothers would sooner have done this deed with the turn of temper that we have."

"Scant apace wilt thou have," says Njal, "ere the like befalls thee; but need will drive thee to it."

Then they went to meet Gunnar, and told him of the slaying. Gunnar spoke and said that was little manscath, "but yet he was a free man."

Njal offered to make peace at once, and Gunnar said yes, and he was to settle the terms himself. He made his award there and then, and laid it at one hundred in silver. Njal paid down the money on the spot, and they were at peace after that.

CHAPTER XLI. SIGMUND COMES OUT TO ICELAND.

There was a man whose name was Sigmund. He was the son of Lambi, the son of Sighvat the Red. He was a great voyager, and a comely and a courteous man; tall too, and strong. He was a man of proud spirit, and a good skald, and well trained in most feats of strength. He was noisy and boisterous, and given to jibes and mocking. He made the land east in Hornfirth. Skiold was the name of his fellow-traveller; he was a Swedish man, and ill to do with. They took horse and rode from the east out of Hornfirth, and did not draw bridle before they came to Lithend, in the Fleetlithe. Gunnar gave them a hearty welcome, for the bonds of kinship were close between them. Gunnar begged Sigmund to stay there that winter, and Sigmund said he would take the offer if Skiold his fellow might be there too.

"Well, I have been so told about him," said Gunnar, "that he is no better of thy temper; but as it is, thou rather needest to have it bettered. This, too, is a bad house to stay at, and I would just give both of you a bit of advice, my kinsmen, not to fire up at the egging on of my wife Hallgerda; for she takes much in hand that is far from my will."

"His hands are clean who warns another," says Sigmund.

"Then mind the advice given thee," says Gunnar, "for thou art sure to be sore tried; and go along always with me, and lean upon my counsel."

After that they were in Gunnar's company. Hallgerda was good to Sigmund; and it soon came about that things grew so warm that she loaded him with money, and tended him no worse than her own husband; and many talked about that, and did not know what lay under it.

One day Hallgerda said to Gunnar—"It is not good to be content with that hundred in silver which thou tookest for my kinsman Brynjolf. I shall avenge him if I may," she says.

Gunnar said he had no mind to bandy words with her, and went away. He met Kolskegg, and said to him, "Go and see Njal; and tell him that Thord must beware of himself though peace has been made, for, methinks, there is faithlessness somewhere."

He rode off and told Njal, but Njal told Thord, and Kolskegg rode home, and Njal thanked them for their faithfulness.

Once on a time they two were out in the "town," Njal and Thord; a he-goat was wont to go up and down in the "town," and no one was allowed to drive him away. Then Thord spoke and said—

"Well, this is a wondrous thing!"

"What is it that thou see'st that seems after a wondrous fashion?" says Njal.

"Methinks the goat lies here in the hollow, and he is all one gore of blood."

Njal said that there was no goat there, nor anything else.

"What is it then?" says Thord.

"Thou must be a 'fey' man," says Njal, "and thou must have seen the fetch that follows thee, and now be ware of thyself."

"That will stand me in no stead," says Thord, "if death is doomed for me."

Then Hallgerda came to talk with Thrain Sigfus' son, and said—"I would think thee my son-in-law indeed," she says, "if thou slayest Thord Freedmanson."

"I will not do that," he says, "for then I shall have the wrath of my kinsman Gunnar; and besides, great things hang on this deed, for this slaying would soon be avenged."

"Who will avenge it?" she asks; "is it the beardless carle?"

"Not so," says he; "his sons will avenge it."

After that they talked long and low, and no man knew what counsel they took together.

Once it happened that Gunnar was not at home, but those companions were. Thrain had come in from Gritwater, and then he and they and Hallgerda sat out of doors and talked. Then Hallgerda said—

"This have ye two brothers in arms, Sigmund and Skiold, promised to slay Thord Freedmanson; but Thrain thou hast promised me that thou wouldst stand by them when they did the deed."

They all acknowledged that they had given her this promise.

"Now I will counsel you how to do it," she says: "Ye shall ride east into Hornfirth after your goods, and come home about the beginning of the Thing, but if ye are at home before it begins, Gunnar will wish that ye should ride to the Thing with him. Njal will be at the Thing and his sons and Gunnar, but then ye two shall slay Thord."

They all agreed that this plan should be carried out. After that they busked them east to the Firth, and Gunnar was not aware of what they were about, and Gunnar rode to the Thing. Njal sent Thord Freedmanson away east under Eyjafell, and bade him be away there one night. So he went east, but he could not get back from the east, for the Fleet had risen so high that it could not be crossed on horseback ever so far up. Njal waited for him one night, for he had meant him to have ridden with him; and Njal said to Bergthora, that she must send Thord to the Thing as soon as ever he came home. Two nights after, Thord came from the east, and Bergthora told him that he must ride to the Thing, "but first thou shalt ride up into Thorolfssfell and see about the farm there, and do not be there longer than one or two nights."

CHAPTER XLII. THE SLAYING OF THORD FREEDSMANSON.

Then Sigmund came from the east and those companions. Hallgerda told them that Thord was at home, but that he was to ride straightway to the Thing after a few nights' space. "Now ye will have a fair chance at him," he says, "but if this goes off, ye will never get nigh him." Men came to Lithend from Thorolfssfell, and told Hallgerda that Thord was there. Hallgerda went to Thrain Sigfus' son, and his companions, and said to him, "Now is Thord on Thorolfssfell, and now your best plan is to fall on him and kill him as he goes home."

"That we will do," says Sigmund. So they went out, and took their weapons and horses and rode on the way to meet him. Sigmund said to Thrain, "Now thou shalt have nothing to do with it; for we shall not need all of us."

"Very well, so I will," says he.

Then Thord rode up to them a little while after, and Sigmund said to him—

"Give thyself up," he says, "for now shalt thou die."

"That shall not be," says Thord, "come thou to single combat with me."

"That shall not be either," says Sigmund, "we will make the most of our numbers; but it is not strange that Skarphedinn is strong, for it is said that a fourth of a foster-child's strength comes from the foster-father."

"Thou wilt feel the force of that," says Thord, "for Skarphedinn will avenge me."

After that they fall on him, and he breaks a spear of each of them, so well did he guard himself. Then Skiolld cut off his hand, and he still kept them off with his other hand for some time, till Sigmund thrust him through. Then he fell dead to earth. They threw over him turf and stones; and Thrain said—"We have won an ill work, and Njal's sons will take this slaying ill when they hear of it."

They ride home and tell Hallgerda. She was glad to hear of the slaying, but Rannveig, Gunnar's mother, said—

"It is said 'but a short while is hand fain of blow,' and so it will be here; but still Gunnar will set thee free from this matter. But if Hallgerda makes thee take another fly in thy mouth, then that will be thy bane."

Hallgerda sent a man to Bergthorsknoll, to tell the slaying, and another man to the Thing, to tell it to Gunnar. Bergthora said she would not fight against Hallgerda with ill worth about such a matter; "that," quoth she, "would be no revenge for so great a quarrel."

CHAPTER XLIII. NJAL AND GUNNAR MAKE PEACE FOR THE SLAYING OF THORD.

But when the messenger came to the Thing to tell Gunnar of the slaying, then Gunnar said—

"This has happened ill, and no tidings could come to my ears which I should think worse; but yet we will now go at once and see Njal. I still hope he may take it well, though he be sorely tried."

So they went to see Njal, and called him to come out and talk to them. He went out at once to meet Gunnar, and they talked, nor were there any more men by at first than Kolskegg.

"Hard tidings have I to tell thee," says Gunnar; "the slaying of Thord Freedmanson, and I wish to offer thee self-doom for the slaying."

Njal held his peace some while, and then said—

"That is well offered, and I will take it; but yet it is to be looked for, that I shall have blame from my wife or from my sons for that, for it will mislike them much; but still I will run the risk, for I know that I have to deal with a good man and true; nor do I wish that any breach should arise in our friendship on my part."

"Wilt thou let thy sons be by, pray?" says Gunnar.

"I will not," says Njal, "for they will not break the peace which I make, but if they stand by while we make it, they will not pull well together with us."

"So it shall be," says Gunnar. "See thou to it alone."

Then they shook one another by the hand, and made peace well and quickly.

Then Njal said—"The award that I make is two hundred in silver, and that thou wilt think much."

"I do not think it too much," says Gunnar, and went home to his booth.

Njal's sons came home, and Skarphedinn asked whence that great sum of money came, which his father held in his hand.

Njal said—"I tell you of your foster-father's Thord's slaying, and we two, Gunnar and I, have now made peace in the matter, and he has paid an atonement for him as for two men."

"Who slew him?" says Skarphedinn.

"Sigmund and Skiolld, but Thrain was standing near too," says Njal.

"They thought they had need of much strength," says Skarphedinn, and sang a song—

Bold in deeds of derring-do,
Burdener of ocean's steeds,
Strength enough it seems they needed
All to slay a single man;

When shall we our hands uplift?
We who brandish burnished steel—
Famous men erst reddened weapons,
When? if now we quiet sit?

"Yes! when shall the day come when we shall lift our hands?"

"That will not be long off," says Njal, "and then thou shalt not be balked; but still, methinks, I set great store on your not breaking this peace that I have made."

"Then we will not break it," says Skarphedinn, "but if anything arises between us, then we will bear in mind the old feud."

"Then I will ask you to spare no one," says Njal.

CHAPTER XLIV. SIGMUND MOCKS NJAL AND HIS SONS.

Now men ride home from the Thing; and when Gunnar came home, he said to Sigmund—

"Thou art a more unlucky man than I thought, and turnest thy good gifts to thine own ill. But still I have made peace for thee with Njal and his sons; and now, take care that thou dost not let another fly come into thy mouth. Thou art not at all after my mind, thou goest about with jibes and jeers, with scorn and mocking; but that is not my turn of mind. That is why thou gettest on so well with Hallgerda, because ye two have your minds more alike."

Gunnar scolded him a long time, and he answered him well, and said he would follow his counsel more for the time to come than he had followed it hitherto. Gunnar told him then they might get on together. Gunnar and Njal kept up their friendship though the rest of their people saw little of one another. It happened once that some gangrel women came to Lithend from Bergthorsknoll; they were great gossips and rather spiteful tongued. Hallgerda had a bower, and sate often in it, and there sate with her daughter Thorgerda, and there too were Thrain and Sigmund, and a crowd of women. Gunnar was not there nor Kolskegg. These gangrel women went into the bower, and Hallgerda greeted them, and made room for them; then she asked them for news, but they said they had none to tell. Hallgerda asked where they had been over night; they said at Bergthorsknoll.

"What was Njal doing?" she says.

"He was hard at work sitting still," they said.

"What were Njal's sons doing?" she says; "they think themselves men at any rate."

"Tall men they are in growth," they say, "but as yet they are all untried; Skarphedinn whetted an axe, Grim fitted a spearhead to the shaft, Helgi rivetted a hilt on a sword, Hauskuld strengthened the handle of a shield."

"They must be bent on some great deed," says Hallgerda.

"We do not know that," they say.

"What were Njal's house-carles doing?" she asks.

"We don't know what some of them were doing, but one was carting dung up the hill-side."

"What good was there in doing that?" she asks.

"He said it made the swathe better there than any where else," they reply. "Witless now is Njal," says Hallgerda, "though he knows how to give counsel on every thing."

"How so?" they ask.

"I will only bring forward what is true to prove it," says she; "why doesn't he make them cart dung over his beard that he may be like other men? Let us call him 'the beardless carle': but his sons we will call 'dung-beardlings'; and now do pray give some stave about them, Sigmund, and let us get some good by thy gift of song."

"I am quite ready to do that," says he, and sang these verses—

Lady proud with hawk in hand,
Prithce why should dungbeard boys,
Reft of reason, dare to hammer
Handle fast on battle shield?
For these lads of loathly feature—
Lady scattering swanbath's beams—
Shall not shun this ditty shameful
Which I shape upon them now.

He the beardless carle shall listen
While I lash him with abuse,
Loon at whom our stomachs sicken.

Soon shall hear these words of scorn;
Far too nice for such base fellows
Is the name my bounty gives,
Eën my muse her help refuses,
Making mirth of dungbeard boys.

Here I find a nickname fitting
For those noisome dungbeard boys—
Loath am I to break my bargain
Linked with such a noble man—
Knit we all our taunts together—
Known to me is mind of man—
Call we now with outburst common,
Him, that churl, the beardless carle.

"Thou art a jewel indeed," says Hallgerda; "how yielding thou art to what I ask!"

Just then Gunnar came in. He had been standing outside the door of the bower, and heard all the words that had passed. They were in a great fright when they saw him come in, and then all held their peace, but before there had been bursts of laughter.

Gunnar was very wroth, and said to Sigmund, "thou art a foolish man, and one that cannot keep to good advice, and thou revilest Njal's sons, and Njal himself who is most worth of all; and this thou doest in spite of what thou hast already done. Mind, this will be thy death. But if any man repeats these words that thou hast spoken, or these verses that thou hast made, that man shall be sent away at once, and have my wrath beside."

But they were all so sore afraid of him, that no one dared to repeat those words. After that he went away, but the gangrel women talked among themselves, and said that they would get a reward from Bergthora if they told her all this. They went then away afterwards down thither, and took Bergthora aside and told her the whole story of their own free will.

Bergthora spoke and said, when men sate down to the board, "Gifts have been given to all of you, father and sons, and ye will be no true men unless ye repay them somehow."

"What gifts are these?" asks Skarphedinn.

"You, my sons," says Bergthora, "have got one gift between you all. Ye are nick-named 'Dung-beardlings,' but my husband 'the beardless carle'."

"Ours is no woman's nature," says Skarphedinn, "that we should fly into a rage at every little thing."

"And yet Gunnar was wroth for your sakes," says she, "and he is thought to be good-tempered. But if ye do not take vengeance for this wrong, ye will avenge no shame."

"The carline, our mother, thinks this fine sport," says Skarphedinn, and smiled scornfully as he spoke, but still the sweat burst out upon his brow, and red flecks came over his cheeks, but that was not his wont. Grim was silent and bit his lip. Helgi made no sign, and he said never a word. Hauskuld went off with Bergthora; she came into the room again, and fretted and foamed much.

Njal spoke and said, "'slow and sure,' says the proverb, mistress! and so it is with many things, though they try men's tempers, that there are always two sides to a story, even when vengeance is taken."

But at even when Njal was come into his bed, he heard that an axe came against the panel and rang loudly, but there was another shut bed, and there the shields were hung up, and he sees that they are away. He said, "who have taken down our shields?"

"Thy sons went out with them," says Bergthora.

Njal pulled his shoes on his feet, and went out at once, and round to the other side of the house, and sees that they were taking their course right up the slope; he said, "whither away, Skarphedinn?"

"To look after thy sheep," he answers.

"You would not then be armed," said Njal, "if you meant that, and your errand must be something else."

Then Skarphedinn sang a song—

Squanderer of hoarded wealth,
Some there are that own rich treasure,
Ore of sea that clasps the earth,
And yet care to count their sheep;
Those who forge sharp songs of mocking,
Death songs, scarcely can possess
Sense of sheep that crop the grass;
Such as these I seek in fight;

and said afterwards—

"We shall fish for salmon, father."

"'Twould be well then if it turned out so that the prey does not get away from you."

They went their way, but Njal went to his bed, and he said to Bergthora, "Thy sons were out of doors all of them, with arms, and now thou must have egged them on to something."

"I will give them my heartfelt thanks," said Bergthora, "if they tell me the slaying of Sigmund."

CHAPTER XLV. THE SLAYING OF SIGMUND AND SKIOLLD.

Now they, Njal's sons, fare up to Fleetlithe, and were that night under the Lithe, and when the day began to break, they came near to Lithend. That same morning both Sigmund and Skiold rose up and meant to go to the stud-horses; they had bits with them, and caught the horses that were in the "town" and rode away on them. They found the stud-horses between two brooks. Skarphedinn caught sight of them, for Sigmund was in bright clothing. Skarphedinn said, "See you now the red elf yonder, lads?" They looked that way, and said they saw him.

Skarphedinn spoke again: "Thou, Hauskuld, shalt have nothing to do with it, for thou wilt often be sent about alone without due heed; but I mean Sigmund for myself; methinks that is like a man; but Grim and Helgi, they shall try to slay Skiold."

Hauskuld sat him down, but they went until they came up to them. Skarphedinn said to Sigmund—

"Take thy weapons and defend thyself; that is more needful now, than to make mocking songs on me and my brothers."

Sigmund took up his weapons, but Skarphedinn waited the while. Skiold turned against Grim and Helgi, and they fell hotly to fight. Sigmund had a helm on his head, and a shield at his side, and was girt with a sword, his spear was in his hand; now he turns against Skarphedinn, and thrusts at once at him with his spear, and the thrust came on his shield. Skarphedinn dashes the spearhaft in two, and lifts up his axe and hews at Sigmund, and cleaves his shield down to below the handle. Sigmund drew his sword and cut at Skarphedinn, and the sword cuts into his shield, so that it stuck fast. Skarphedinn gave the shield such a quick twist, that Sigmund let go his sword. Then Skarphedinn hews at Sigmund with his axe, the "Ogress of war." Sigmund had on a corselet, the axe came on his shoulder. Skarphedinn cleft the shoulder-blade right through, and at the same time pulled the axe towards him, Sigmund fell down on both knees, but sprang up again at once.

"Thou hast lifted low to me already," says Skarphedinn, "but still thou shalt fall upon thy mother's bosom ere we two part."

"Ill is that then," says Sigmund.

Skarphedinn gave him a blow on his helm, and after that dealt Sigmund his death-blow.

Grim cut off Skiold's foot at the ankle-joint, but Helgi thrust him through with his spear, and he got his death there and then.

Skarphedinn saw Hallgerda's shepherd, just as he had hewn off Sigmund's head; he handed the head to the shepherd, and bade him bear it to Hallgerda, and said she would know whether that head had made jeering songs about them, and with that he sang a song.

Here! this head shall thou, that heapest
Hoards from ocean-caverns won,
Bear to Hallgerd with my greeting,
Her that hurries men to fight;
Sure am I, O firewood splitter!
That yon spendthrift knows it well,
And will answer if it ever
Uttered mocking songs on us.

The shepherd casts the head down as soon as ever they parted, for he dared not do so while their eyes were on him. They fared along till they met some men down by Markfleet, and told them the tidings. Skarphedinn gave himself out as the slayer of Sigmund; and Grim and Helgi as the slayers of Skiold; then they fared home and told Njal the tidings. He answers them—

"Good luck to your hands! Here no self-doom will come to pass as things stand."

Now we must take up the story, and say that the shepherd came home to Lithend. He told Hallgerda the tidings.

"Skarphedinn put Sigmund's head into my hands," he says, "and bade me bring it thee; but I dared not do it, for I knew not how thou wouldst like that."

"'Twas ill that thou didst not do that," she says; "I would have brought it to Gunnar, and then he would have avenged his kinsman, or have to bear every man's blame."

After that she went to Gunnar and said, "I tell thee of thy kinsman Sigmund's slaying: Skarphedinn slew him, and wanted them to bring me the head."

"Just what might be looked for to befall him," says Gunnar, "for ill redes bring ill luck, and both you and Skarphedinn have often done one another spiteful turns."

Then Gunnar went away; he let no steps be taken towards a suit for manslaughter, and did nothing about it. Hallgerda often put him in mind of it, and kept saying that Sigmund had fallen unatoned. Gunnar gave no heed to that.

Now three Things passed away, at each of which men thought that he would follow up the suit: then a knotty point came on Gunnar's hands, which he knew not how to set about, and then he rode to find Njal. He gave Gunnar a hearty welcome. Gunnar said to Njal, "I am come to seek a bit of good counsel at thy hands about a knotty point."

"Thou art worthy of it," says Njal, and gave him counsel what to do. Then Gunnar stood up and thanked him. Njal then spoke and said, and took Gunnar by the hand, "Over long hath thy kinsman Sigmund been unatoned." "He has been long ago atoned," says Gunnar, "but still I will not fling back the honour offered me."

Gunnar had never spoken an ill word of Njal's sons. Njal would have nothing else than that Gunnar should make his own award in the matter. He awarded two hundred in silver, but let Skiold fall without a price. They paid down all the money at once.

Gunnar declared this their atonement at the Thingskala Thing, when most men were at it, and laid great weight on the way in which they (Njal and his sons) had behaved; he told too those bad words which cost Sigmund his life, and no man was to repeat them or sing the verses, but if any sung them, the man who uttered them was to fall without atonement.

Both Gunnar and Njal gave each other their words that no such matters should ever happen that they would not settle among themselves; and this pledge was well kept ever after, and they were always friends.

CHAPTER XLVI. OF GIZUR THE WHITE AND GEIR THE PRIEST.

There was a man named Gizur the White; he was Teit's son; Kettlebjorn the Old's son, of Mossfell. Gizur the White kept house at Mossfell, and was a great chief. That man is also named in this story, whose name was Geir the priest; his mother was Thorkatla, another daughter of Kettlebjorn the Old of Mossfell. Geir kept house at Lithé. He and Gizur backed one another in every matter. At that time Mord Valgard's son kept house at Hof on the Rangrivræles; he was crafty and spiteful. Valgard his father was then abroad, but his mother was dead. He was very envious of Gunnar of Lithend. He was wealthy, so far as goods went, but had not many friends.

CHAPTER XLVII. OF OTKELL IN KIRKBY.

There was a man named Otkell; he was the son of Skarf, the son of Hallkell, who fought with Gorm of Gormness, and felled him on the holm. This Hallkell and Kettlebjorn the Old were brothers.

Otkell kept house at Kirkby; his wife's name was Thorgerda; she was a daughter of Mar, the son of Runolf, the son of Naddad of the Faroe isles. Otkell was wealthy in goods. His son's name was Thorgeir; he was young in years, and a bold dashing man.

Skamkell was the name of another man; he kept house at another farm called Hof; he was well off for money, but he was a spiteful man and a liar; quarrelsome too, and ill to deal with. He was Otkell's friend. Hallkell was the name of Otkell's brother; he

was a tall strong man, and lived there with Otkell; their brother's name was Hallbjorn the White; he brought out to Iceland a thrall, whose name was Malcolm; he was Irish and had not many friends.

Hallbjorn went to stay with Otkell, and so did his thrall Malcolm. The thrall was always saying that he should think himself happy if Otkell owned him. Otkell was kind to him, and gave him a knife and belt, and a full suit of clothes, but the thrall turned his hand to any work that Otkell wished.

Otkell wanted to make a bargain with his brother for the thrall; he said he would give him the thrall, but said too, that he was a worse treasure than he thought. And as soon as Otkell owned the thrall, then he did less and less work. Otkell often said outright to Hallbjorn, that he thought the thrall did little work; and he told Otkell that there was worse in him yet to come.

At that time came a great scarcity, so that men fell short both of meat and hay, and that spread over all parts of Iceland. Gunnar shared his hay and meat with many men; and all got them who came thither, so long as his stores lasted. At last it came about that Gunnar himself fell short both of hay and meat. Then Gunnar called on Kolskegg to go along with him; he called too on Thrain Sigfus' son, and Lambi Sigurd's son. They fared to Kirkby, and called Otkell out. He greeted them, and Gunnar said, "It so happens that I am come to deal with thee for hay and meat, if there be any left."

Otkell answers, "There is store of both, but I will sell thee neither."

"Wilt thou give me them then," says Gunnar, "and run the risk of my paying thee back somehow?"

"I will not do that either," says Otkell.

Skamkell all the while was giving him bad counsel.

Then Thrain Sigfus' son said, "It would serve him right if we take both hay and meat and lay down the worth of them instead." Skamkell answered, "All the men of Mossfell must be dead and gone then, if ye, sons of Sigfus, are to come and rob them."

"I will have no hand in any robbery," says Gunnar.

"Wilt thou buy a thrall of me?" says Otkell.

"I'll not spare to do that," says Gunnar. After that Gunnar bought the thrall, and fared away as things stood.

Njal hears of this, and said, "Such things are ill done, to refuse to let Gunnar buy; and it is not a good outlook for others if such men as he cannot get what they want."

"What's the good of thy talking so much about such a little matter?" says Bergthora; "far more like a man would it be to let him have both meat and hay, when thou lackest neither of them."

"That is clear as day," says Njal, "and I will of a surety supply his need somewhat."

Then he fared up to Thorolfsfell, and his sons with him, and they bound hay on fifteen horses; but on five horses they had meat. Njal came to Lithend, and called Gunnar out. He greeted them kindly.

"Here is hay and meat," said Njal, "which I will give thee; and my wish is, that thou shouldst never look to any one else than to me if thou standest in need of any thing."

"Good are thy gifts," says Gunnar, "but methinks thy friendship is still more worth, and that of thy sons."

After that Njal fared home, and now the spring passes away.

CHAPTER XLVIII. HOW HALLGERDA MAKES MALCOLM STEAL FROM KIRKBY.

Now Gunnar is about to ride to the Thing, but a great crowd of men from the Side east turned in as guests at his house.

Gunnar bade them come and be his guests again, as they rode back from the Thing; and they said they would do so.

Now they ride to the Thing, and Njal and his sons were there. That Thing was still and quiet.

Now we must take up the story, and say that Hallgerda comes to talk with Malcolm the thrall.

"I have thought of an errand to send thee on," she says; "thou shalt go to Kirkby."

"And what shall I do there?" he says.

"Thou shalt steal from thence food enough to load two horses, and mind and have butter and cheese; but thou shalt lay fire in the storehouse, and all will think that it has arisen out of heedlessness, but no one will think that there has been theft."

"Bad have I been," said the thrall, "but never have I been a thief."

"Hear a wonder!" says Hallgerda, "thou makest thyself good, thou that hast been both thief and murderer; but thou shalt not dare to do aught else than go, else will I let thee be slain."

He thought he knew enough of her to be sure that she would so do if he went not; so he took at night two horses and laid pack-saddles on them, and went his way to Kirkby. The house-dog knew him and did not bark at him, and ran and fawned on him. After that he went to the storehouse and loaded the two horses with food out of it, but the storehouse he burnt, and the dog he slew.

He went up along by Rangrifer, and his shoe-thong snapped; so he takes his knife and makes the shoe right, but he leaves the knife and belt lying there behind him.

He fares till he comes to Lithend; then he misses the knife, but dares not to go back.

Now he brings Hallgerda the food, and she showed herself well pleased at it.

Next morning when men came out of doors at Kirkby there they saw great scathe. Then a man was sent to the Thing to tell Otkell, he bore the loss well, and said it must have happened because the kitchen was next to the storehouse; and all thought that that was how it happened.

Now men ride home from the Thing, and many rode to Lithend. Hallgerda set food on the hoard, and in came cheese and butter. Gunnar knew that such food was not to be looked for in his house, and asked Hallgerda whence it came?

"Thence," she says, "whence thou mightest well eat of it; besides, it is no man's business to trouble himself with housekeeping."

Gunnar got wroth and said, "Ill indeed is it if I am a partaker with thieves"; and with that he gave her a slap on the cheek.

She said she would bear that slap in mind and repay it if she could.

So she went off and he went with her, and then all that was on the board was cleared away, but flesh-meat was brought in instead, and all thought that was because the flesh was thought to have been got in a better way.

Now the men who had been at the Thing fare away.

CHAPTER XLIX. OF SKAMKELL'S EVIL COUNSEL.

Now we must tell of Skamkell. He rides after some sheep up along Rangrifer, and he sees something shining in the path. He finds a knife and belt, and thinks he knows both of them. He fares with them to Kirkby; Otkell was out of doors when Skamkell came. He spoke to him and said—

"Knowest thou aught of these pretty things?"

"Of a surety," says Otkell, "I know them."

"Who owns them?" asks Skamkell.

"Malcolm the thrall," says Otkell.

"Then more shall see and know them than we two," says Skamkell, "for true will I be to thee in counsel."

They showed them to many men, and all knew them. Then Skamkell said—

"What counsel wilt thou now take?"

"We shall go and see Mord Valgard's son," answers Otkell, "and seek counsel of him."

So they went to Hof, and showed the pretty things to Mord, and asked him if he knew them?

He said he knew them well enough, but what was there in that? "Do you think you have a right to look for anything at Lithend?"

"We think it hard for us," says Skamkell, "to know what to do, when such mighty men have a hand in it."

"That is so, sure enough," says Mord, "but yet I will get to know those things out of Gunnar's household, which none of you will ever know."

"We would give thee money," they say, "if thou wouldst search out this thing."

"That money I shall buy full dear," answered Mord, "but still, perhaps, it may be that I will look at the matter."

They gave him three marks of silver for lending them his help.

Then he gave them this counsel, that women should go about from house to house with small wares, and give them to the housewives, and mark what was given them in return.

"For," he says, "'tis the turn of mind of all men first to give away what has been stolen, if they have it in their keeping, and so it will be here also, if this hath happened by the hand of man. Ye shall then come and show me what has been given to each in each house, and I shall then be free from further share in this matter, if the truth comes to light."

To this they agreed, and went home afterwards.

Mord sends women about the country, and they were away half a month. Then they came back, and had big bundles. Mord asked where they had most given them?

They said that at Lithend most was given them, and Hallgerda had been most bountiful to them.

He asked what was given them there?

"Cheese," say they.

He begged to see it, and they showed it to him, and it was in great slices. These he took and kept.

A little after, Mord fared to see Otkell, and bade that he would bring Thorgerda's cheese-mould; and when that was done, he laid the slices down in it, and lo! they fitted the mould in every way.

Then they saw, too, that a whole cheese had been given to them.

Then Mord said, "Now may ye see that Hallgerda must have stolen the cheese"; and they all passed the same judgment; and then Mord said, that now he thought he was free of this matter.

After that they parted.

Shortly after Kolskegg fell to talking with Gunnar, and said—

"Ill is it to tell, but the story is in every man's mouth, that Hallgerda must have stolen, and that she was at the bottom of all that great scathe that befell at Kirkby."

Gunnar said that he too thought that must be so. "But what is to be done now?"

Kolskegg answered, "That wilt think it thy most bounden duty to make atonement for thy wife's wrong, and methinks it were best that thou farest to see Otkell, and makest him a handsome offer."

"This is well spoken," says Gunnar, "and so it shall be."

A little after Gunnar sent after Thrain Sigfus' son, and Lambi Sigurd's son, and they came at once.

Gunnar told them whither he meant to go, and they were well pleased. Gunnar rode with eleven men to Kirkby, and called Otkell out. Skamkell was there too, and said, "I will go out with thee, and it will be best now to have the balance of wit on thy side. And I would wish to stand closest by thee when thou needest it most, and now this will be put to the proof. Methinks it were best that thou puttest on an air of great weight."

Then they, Otkell and Skamkell, and Hallkell and Hallbjorn, went out all of them.

They greeted Gunnar, and he took their greeting well. Otkell asks whither he meant to go?

"No farther than here," says Gunnar, "and my errand hither is to tell thee about that bad mishap—how it arose from the plotting of my wife and that thrall whom I bought from thee."

"Tis only what was to be looked for," says Hallbjorn.

"Now I will make thee a good offer," says Gunnar, "and the offer is this, that the best men here in the country round settle the matter."

"This is a fair-sounding offer," said Skamkell, "but an unfair and uneven one. Thou art a man who has many friends among the householders, but Otkell has not many friends."

"Well," says Gunnar, "then I will offer thee that I shall make an award, and utter it here on this spot, and so we will settle the matter, and my good-will shall follow the settlement. But I will make thee an atonement by paying twice the worth of what was lost."

"This choice shalt thou not take," said Skamkell; "and it is unworthy to give up to him the right to make his own award, when thou oughtest to have kept it for thyself."

So Otkell said, "I will not give up to thee, Gunnar, the right to make thine own award."

"I see plainly," said Gunnar, "the help of men who will be paid off for it one day I daresay; but come now, utter an award for thyself."

Otkell leant toward Skamkell and said, "What shall I answer now?"

"This thou shalt call a good offer, but still put thy suit into the hands of Gizur the white, and Geir the priest, and then many will say this, that thou behavest like Hallkell, thy grandfather, who was the greatest of champions."

"Well offered is this, Gunnar," said Otkell, "but still my will is thou wouldst give me time to see Gizur the white."

"Do now whatever thou likest in the matter," said Gunnar; "but men will say this, that thou couldst not see thine own honour when thou wouldst have none of the choices I offer thee."

Then Gunnar rode home, and when he had gone away, Hallbjorn said, "Here I see how much man differs from man. Gunnar made thee good offers, but thou wouldst take none of them; or how dost thou think to strive with Gunnar in a quarrel, when no one is his match in fight. But now he is still so kind-hearted a man that it may be he will let these offers stand, though thou art only ready to take them afterwards. Methinks it were best that thou farest to see Gizur the white and Geir the priest now this very hour."

Otkell let them catch his horse, and made ready in every way. Otkell was not sharp-sighted, and Skamkell walked on the way along with him, and said to Otkell—

"Methought it strange that thy brother would not take this toil from thee, and now I will make thee an offer to fare instead of thee, for I know that the journey is irksome to thee."

"I will take that offer," says Otkell, "but mind and be as truthful as ever thou canst."

"So it shall be," says Skamkell.

Then Skamkell took his horse and cloak, but Otkell walks home.

Hallbjorn was out of doors, and said to Otkell—

"Ill is it to have a thrall for one's bosom friend, and we shall rue this for ever that thou hast turned back, and it is an unwise step to send the greatest liar on an errand, of which one may so speak that men's lives hang on it."

"Thou wouldst be sore afraid," says Otkell, "if Gunnar had his bill aloft, when thou art so scared now."

"No one knows who will be most afraid then," said Hallbjorn; "but this thou wilt have to own, that Gunnar does not lose much time in brandishing his bill when he is wroth."

"Ah!" said Otkell, "ye are all of you for yielding but Skamkell."

And then they were both wroth.

CHAPTER L. OF SKAMKELL'S LYING.

Skamkell came to Mossfell, and repeated all the offers to Gizur.

"It so seems to me," says Gizur, "as though these have been bravely offered; but why took he not these offers?"

"The chief cause was," answers Skamkell, "that all wished to show thee honour, and that was why he waited for thy utterance; besides, that is best for all."

So Skamkell stayed there the night over, but Gizur sent a man to fetch Geir the priest; and he came there early. Then Gizur told him the story and said—

"What course is to be taken now?"

"As thou no doubt hast already made up thy mind—to make the best of the business for both sides."

"Now we will let Skamkell tell his tale a second time, and see how he repeats it."

So they did that, and Gizur said—

"Thou must have told this story right; but still I have seen thee to be the wickedest of men, and there is no faith in faces if thou turnest out well."

Skamkell fared home, and rides first to Kirkby and calls Otkell out. He greets Skamkell well, and Skamkell brought him the greeting of Gizur and Geir.

"But about this matter of the suit," he says, "there is no need to speak softly, how that it is the will of both Gizur and Geir that this suit should not be settled in a friendly way. They gave that counsel that a summons should be set on foot, and that Gunnar should be summoned for having partaken of the goods, but Hallgerda for stealing them."

"It shall be done," said Otkell, "in everything as they have given counsel."

"They thought most of this," says Skamkell, "that thou hadst behaved so proudly; but as for me, I made as great a man of thee in everything as I could."

Now Otkell tells all this to his brothers, and Hallbjorn said—

"This must be the biggest lie."

Now the time goes on until the last of the summoning days before the Althing came.

Then Otkell called on his brothers and Skamkell to ride on the business of the summons to Lithend.

Hallbjorn said he would go, but said also that they would rue this summoning as time went on.

Now they rode twelve of them together to Lithend, but when they came into the "town," there was Gunnar out of doors, and knew naught of their coming till they had ridden right up to the house.

He did not go indoors then, and Otkell thundered out the summons there and then; but when they had made an end of the summoning Skamkell said—

"Is it all right, master?"

"Ye know that best," says Gunnar, "but I will put thee in mind of this journey one of these days, and of thy good help."

"That will not harm us," says Skamkell, "if thy bill be not aloft."

Gunnar was very wroth and went indoors, and told Kolskegg, and Kolskegg said—

"Ill was it that we were not out of doors; they should have come here on the most shameful journey, if we had been by."

"Everything bides its time," says Gunnar; "but this journey will not turn out to their honour."

A little after Gunnar went and told Njal.

"Let it not worry thee a jot," said Njal, "for this will be the greatest honour to thee, ere this Thing comes to an end. As for us, we will all back thee with counsel and force."

Gunnar thanked him and rode home.

Otkell rides to the Thing, and his brothers with him and Skamkell.

CHAPTER LI. OF GUNNAR.

Gunnar rode to the Thing and all the sons of Sigfus; Njal and his sons too, they all went with Gunnar; and it was said that no band was so well knit and hardy as theirs.

Gunnar went one day to the booth of the Dalemén; Hrút was by the booth and Hauskuld, and they greeted Gunnar well. Now Gunnar tells them the whole story of the suit up to that time.

"What counsel gives Njal?" asks Hrút.

"He bade me seek you brothers," says Gunnar, "and said he was sure that he and you would look at the matter in the same light."

"He wishes then," says Hrút, "that I should say what I think for kinship's sake; and so it shall be. Thou shalt challenge Gizur the white to combat on the island, if they do not leave the whole award to thee; but Kolskegg shall challenge Geir the Priest. As for Otkell and his crew, men must be got ready to fall on them; and now we have such great strength all of us together, that thou mayst carry out whatever thou wilt."

Gunnar went home to his booth and told Njal.

"Just what I looked for," said Njal.

Wolf Aurpriest got wind of this plan, and told Gizur, and Gizur said to Otkell—

"Who gave thee that counsel that thou shouldst summon Gunnar?"

"Skamkell told me that that was the counsel of both Geir the priest and thyself."

"But where is that scoundrel," says Gizur, "who has thus lied?"
 "He lies sick up at our booth," says Otkell.

"May he never rise from his bed," says Gizur, "Now we must all go to see Gunnar, and offer him the right to make his own award; but I know not whether he will take that now."

Many men spoke ill of Skamkell, and he lay sick all through the Thing.

Gizur and his friends went to Gunnar's booth; their coming was known, and Gunnar was told as he sat in his booth, and then they all went out and stood in array.

Gizur the white came first, and after a while he spoke and said—

"This is our offer—that thou, Gunnar, makest thine own award in this suit."

"Then," says Gunnar, "it was no doubt far from thy counsel that I was summoned."

"I gave no such counsel," says Gizur, "neither I nor Geir."

"Then thou must clear thyself of this charge by fitting proof."

"What proof dost thou ask?" says Gizur.

"That thou takest an oath," says Gunnar.

"That I will do," says Gizur, "if thou wilt take the award into thine own hands."

"That was the offer I made a while ago," says Gunnar; "but now, methinks, I have a greater matter to pass judgment on."

"It will not be right to refuse to make thine own award," said Njal; "for the greater the matter, the greater the honour in making it."

"Well," said Gunnar, "I will do this to please my friends, and utter my award; but I give Otkell this bit of advice, never to give me cause for quarrel hereafter."

Then Hrut and Hauskuld were sent for, and they came thither, and then Gizur the White and Geir the priest took their oaths; but Gunnar made his award, and spoke with no man about it, and afterwards he uttered it as follows:—

"This is my award," he says; "first, I lay it down that the store-house must be paid for, and the food that was therein; but for the thrall, I will pay thee no fine, for that thou hiddest his faults; but I award him back to thee; for as the saying is, 'Birds of a feather flock most together'. Then, on the other hand, I see that thou hast summoned me in scorn and mockery, and for that I award to myself no less a sum than what the house that was burnt and the stores in it were worth; but if ye think it better that we be not set at one again, then I will let you have your choice of that, but if so I have already made up my mind what I shall do, and then I will fulfil my purpose."

"What we ask," said Gizur, "is that thou shouldst not be hard on Otkell, but we beg this of thee, on the other hand, that thou wouldst be his friend."

"That shall never be," said Gunnar, "so long as I live; but he shall have Skamkell's friendship; on that he has long leant."

"Well," answers Gizur, "we will close with thee in this matter, though thou alone layest down the terms."

Then all this atonement was made and hands were shaken on it, and Gunnar said to Otkell—

"It were wiser to go away to thy kinsfolk; but if thou wilt be here in this country, mind that thou givest me no cause of quarrel."

"That is wholesome counsel," said Gizur; "and so he shall do."

So Gunnar had the greatest honour from that suit, and afterwards men rode home from the Thing.

Now Gunnar sits in his house at home, and so things are quiet for a while.

CHAPTER LII. OF RUNOLF, THE SON OF WOLF AURPRIEST.

There was a man named Runolf, the son of Wolf Aupriest, he kept house at the Dale, east of Markfleet. He was Otkell's guest once when he rode from the Thing. Otkell gave him an ox, all black, without a spot of white, nine winters old. Runolf thanked him for the gift, and bade him come and see him at home whenever he chose to go; and this bidding stood over for some while, so that he had not paid the visit. Runolf often sent men to him and put him in mind that he ought to come; and he always said he would come, but never went.

Now Otkell had two horses, dun coloured, with a black stripe down the back; they were the best steeds to ride in all the country round, and so fond of each other, that whenever one went before, the other ran after him.

There was an Easterling staying with Otkell, whose name was Audulf; he had set his heart on Signy Otkell's daughter. Audulf was a tall man in growth, and strong.

CHAPTER LIII. HOW OTKELL RODE OVER GUNNAR.

It happened next spring that Otkell said that they would ride east to the Dale, to pay Runolf a visit, and all showed themselves well pleased at that. Skamkell and his two brothers, and Audulf and three men more, went along with Otkell. Otkell rode one of the dun horses, but the other ran loose by his side. They shaped their course east towards Markfleet; and now Otkell gallops ahead, and now the horses race against each other, and they break away from the path up towards the Fleetlithe.

Now, Otkell goes faster than he wished, and it happened that Gunnar had gone away from home out of his house all alone; and he had a corn-sieve in one hand, but in the other a hand-axe. He goes down to his seed field and sows his corn there, and had laid his cloak of fine stuff and his axe down by his aide, and so he sows the corn a while.

Now, it must be told how Otkell rides faster than he would. He had spurs on his feet, and so he gallops down over the ploughed field, and neither of them sees the other; and just as Gunnar stands upright, Otkell rides down upon him, and drives one of the spurs into Gunnar's ear, and gives him a great gash, and it bleeds at once much.

Just then Otkell's companions rode up.

"Ye may see, all of you," says Gunnar, "that thou hast drawn my blood, and it is unworthy to go on so. First thou hast summoned me, but now thou treadest me under foot, and ridest over me."

Skamkell said, "Well it was no worse, master, but thou wast not one whit less wroth at the Thing, when thou tookest the self-doom and clutchedst thy bill."

Gunnar said, "When we two next meet thou shalt see the bill." After that they part thus, and Skamkell shouted out and said, "Ye ride hard, lads!"

Gunnar went home, and said never a word to any one about what had happened, and no one thought that this wound could have come by man's doing.

It happened, though, one day that he told it to his brother Kolskegg, and Kolskegg said—

"This thou shalt tell to more men, so that it may not be said that thou layest blame on dead men; for it will be gainsaid if witnesses do not know beforehand what has passed between you."

Then Gunnar told it to his neighbours, and there was little talk about it at first.

Otkell comes east to the Dale, and they get a hearty welcome there, and sit there a week.

Skamkell told Runolf all about their meeting with Gunnar, and how it had gone off; and one man had happened to ask how Gunnar behaved.

"Why," said Skamkell, "if it were a low-born man it would have been said that he had wept."

"Such things are ill spoken," says Runolf, "and when ye two next meet, thou wilt have to own that there is no voice of weeping in his frame of mind; and it will be well if better men have not to pay for thy spite. Now it seems to me best when ye wish to go home that I should go with you, for Gunnar will do me no harm."

"I will not have that," says Otkell; "but I will ride across the Fleet lower down."

Runolf gave Otkell good gifts, and said they should not see one another again.

Otkell bade him then to bear his sons in mind if things turned out so.

CHAPTER LIV. THE FIGHT AT RANGRIVER.

Now we must take up the story, and say that Gunnar was out of doors at Lithend, and sees his shepherd galloping up to the yard. The shepherd rode straight into the "town"; and Gunnar said, "Why ridest thou so hard?"

"I would be faithful to thee," said the man; "I saw men riding down along Markfleet, eight of them together, and four of them were in coloured clothes."

Gunnar said, "That must be Otkell."

The lad said, "I have often heard many temper-trying words of Skamkell's; for Skamkell spoke away there East at Dale, and said that thou sheddest tears when they rode over thee; but I tell it thee because I cannot bear to listen to such speeches of worthless men."

"We must not be word-sick," says Gunnar, "but from this day forth thou shalt do no other work than what thou choosest for thyself."

"Shall I say aught of this to Kolskegg thy brother?" asked the shepherd.

"Go thou and sleep," says Gunnar; "I will tell Kolskegg."

The lad laid him down and fell asleep at once, but Gunnar took the shepherd's horse and laid his saddle on him; he took his shield, and girded him with his sword, Oliver's gift; he sets his helm on his head; takes his bill, and something sung loud in it, and his mother, Rannveig, heard it. She went up to him and said, "Wrathful art thou now, my son, and never saw I thee thus before."

Gunnar goes out, and drives the butt of his spear into the earth, and throws himself into the saddle, and rides away.

His mother, Rannveig, went into the sitting-room, where there was a great noise of talking.

"Ye speak loud," she says, "but yet the bill gave a louder sound when Gunnar went out."

Kolskegg heard what she said, and spoke, "This betokens no small tidings."

"That is well," says Hallgerda, "now they will soon prove whether he goes away from them weeping."

Kolskegg takes his weapons and seeks him a horse, and rides after Gunnar as fast as he could.

Gunnar rides across Acretongue, and so to Geilastofna, and thence to Rangriver, and down the stream to the ford at Hof. There were some women at the milking-post there. Gunnar jumped off his horse and tied him up. By this time the others were riding up towards him; there were flat stones covered with mud in the path that led down to the ford.

Gunnar called out to them and said, "Now is the time to guard yourselves; here now is the bill, and here now ye will put it to the proof whether I shed one tear for all of you."

Then they all of them sprang off their horses' backs and made towards Gunnar. Hallbjorn was the foremost.

"Do not thou come on," says Gunnar; "thee last of all would I harm; but I will spare no one if I have to fight to my life."

"That I cannot do," says Hallbjorn; "thou wilt strive to kill my brother for all that, and it is a shame if I sit idly by." And as he said this he thrust at Gunnar with a great spear which he held in both hands.

Gunnar threw his shield before the blow, but Hallbjorn pierced the shield through. Gunnar thrust the shield down so hard that it stood fast in the earth, but he brandished his sword so quickly that no eye could follow it, and he made a blow with the sword, and it fell on Hallbjorn's arm above the wrist, so that it cut it off.

Skamkell ran behind Gunnar's back and makes a blow at him with a great axe. Gunnar turned short round upon him and parries the blow with the bill, and caught the axe under one of its horns with such a wrench that it flew out of Skamkell's hand away into the river.

Then Gunnar sang a song.

Once thou askedst, foolish fellow,
Of this man, this sea-horse racer,
When as fast as feet could foot it
Forth ye fled from farm of mine,
Whether that were rightly summoned?
Now with gore the spear we redden,

Battle-eager and avenge us
Thus on thee, vile source of strife.

Gunnar gives another thrust with his bill, and through Skamkell, and lifts him up and casts him down in the muddy path on his head.

Audulf the Easterling snatches up a spear and launches it at Gunnar. Gunnar caught the spear with his hand in the air, and hurled it back at once, and it flew through the shield and the Easterling too, and so down into the earth.

Otkell smites at Gunnar with his sword, and aims at his leg just below the knee, but Gunnar leapt up into the air and he misses him. Then Gunnar thrusts at him the bill, and the blow goes through him.

Then Kolskegg comes up, and rushes at once at Hallkell and dealt him his death-blow with his short sword. There and then they slay eight men.

A woman who saw all this, ran home and told Mord, and besought him to part them.

"They alone will be there," he says, "of whom I care not though they slay one another."

"Thou canst not mean to say that," she says, "for thy kinsman Gunnar, and thy friend Otkell will be there."

"Baggage that thou art," he says, "thou art always chattering," and so he lay still indoors while they fought.

Gunnar and Kolskegg rode home after this work, and they rode hard up along the river bank, and Gunnar slipped off his horse and came down on his feet.

Then Kolskegg said, "Hard now thou ridest, brother!"

"Ay," said Gunnar, "that was what Skamkell said when he uttered those very words when they rode over me."

"Well! thou hast avenged that now," says Kolskegg.

"I would like to know," says Gunnar, "whether I am by so much the less brisk and bold than other men, because I think more of killing men than they?"

CHAPTER LV. NJAL'S ADVICE TO GUNNAR.

Now those tidings are heard far and wide, and many say that they thought they had not happened before it was likely. Gunnar rode to Berghthorsknoll and told Njal of these deeds.

Njal said, "Thou hast done great things, but thou hast been sorely tried."

"How will it now go henceforth?" says Gunnar.

"Wilt thou that I tell thee what hath not yet come to pass?" asks Njal. "Thou wilt ride to the Thing, and thou wilt abide by my counsel and get the greatest honour from this matter. This will be the beginning of thy manslayings."

"But give me some cunning counsel," says Gunnar.

"I will do that," says Njal: "never slay more than one man in the same stock, and never break the peace which good men and true make between thee and others, and least of all in such a matter as this."

Gunnar said, "I should have thought there was more risk of that with others than with me."

"Like enough," says Njal, "but still thou shalt so think of thy quarrels that, if that should come to pass of which I have warned thee, then thou wilt have but a little while to live; but otherwise, thou wilt come to be an old man."

Gunnar said, "Dost thou know what will be thine own death?"

"I know it," says Njal.

"What?" asks Gunnar.

"That," says Njal, "which all would be the last to think."

After that Gunnar rode home.

A man was sent to Gizur the white and Geir the priest, for they had had the blood-feud after Otkell. Then they had a meeting, and had a talk about what was to be done; and they were of one mind that the quarrel should be followed up at law. Then some one was sought who would take the suit up, but no one was ready to do that.

"It seems to me," says Gizur, "that now there are only two courses, that one of us two undertakes the suit, and then we shall

have to draw lots who it shall be, or else the man will be unatoned. We may make up our minds, too, that this will be a heavy suit to touch; Gunnar has many kinsmen and is much beloved; but that one of us who does not draw the lot shall ride to the Thing and never leave it until the suit comes to an end."

After that they drew lots, and Geir the priest drew the lot to take up the suit.

A little after, they rode from the west over the river, and came to the spot where the meeting had been by Rangriver, and dug up the bodies, and took witness to the wounds. After that they gave lawful notice and summoned nine neighbours to bear witness in the suit.

They were told that Gunnar was at home with about thirty men; then Geir the priest asked whether Gizur would ride against him with one hundred men.

"I will not do that," says he, "though the balance of force is great on our side."

After that they rode back home. The news that the suit was set on foot was spread all over the country, and the saying ran that the Thing would be very noisy and stormy.

CHAPTER LVI. GUNNAR AND GEIR THE PRIEST STRIVE AT THE THING.

There was a man named Skapti. He was the son of Thorod. That father and son were great chiefs, and very well skilled in law. Thorod was thought to be rather crafty and guileful. They stood by Gizur the white in every quarrel.

As for the Lithemen and the dwellers by Rangriver, they came in a great body to the Thing. Gunnar was so beloved that all said with one voice that they would back him.

Now they all come to the Thing and fit up their booths. In company with Gizur the white were these chiefs: Skapti Thorod's son, Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, Oddi of Kidberg, and Halldor Ornlöf's son.

Now one day men went to the Hill of Laws, and then Geir the priest stood up and gave notice that he had a suit of manslaughter against Gunnar for the slaying of Otkell. Another suit of manslaughter he brought against Gunnar for the slaying of Hallbjorn the white; then too he went on in the same way as to the slaying of Audulf, and so too as to the slaying of Skamkell. Then too he laid a suit of manslaughter against Kolskegg for the slaying of Hallkell.

And when he had given due notice of all his suits of manslaughter it was said that he spoke well. He asked, too, in what Quarter court the suits lay, and in what house in the district the defendants dwelt. After that men went away from the Hill of Laws, and so the Thing goes on till the day when the courts were to be set to try suits. Then either side gathered their men together in great strength.

Geir the priest and Gizur the white stood at the court of the men of Rangriver looking north, and Gunnar and Njal stood looking south towards the court.

Geir the priest bade Gunnar to listen to his oath, and then he took the oath, and afterwards declared his suit.

Then he let men bear witness of the notice given of the suit; then he called upon the neighbours who were to form the inquest to take their seats; then he called on Gunnar to challenge the inquest; and then he called on the inquest to utter their finding. Then the neighbours who were summoned on the inquest went to the court and took witness, and said that there was a bar to their finding in the suit as to Audulf's slaying, because the next of kin who ought to follow it up was in Norway, and so they had nothing to do with that suit.

After that they uttered their finding in the suit as to Otkell, and brought in Gunnar as truly guilty of killing him.

Then Geir the priest called on Gunnar for his defence, and took witness of all the steps in the suit which had been proved.

Then Gunnar, in his turn, called on Geir the priest to listen to his oath, and to the defence which he was about to bring forward in the suit. Then he took the oath and said—

"This defence I make to this suit, that I took witness and outlawed Otkell before my neighbours for that bloody wound which

I got when Otkell gave me a hurt with his spur; but thee, Geir the priest, I forbid by a lawful protest made before a priest to pursue this suit, and so, too, I forbid the judges to hear it; and with this I make all the steps hitherto taken in this suit void and of none-effect. I forbid thee by a lawful protest, a full, fair, and binding protest, as I have a right to forbid thee by the common custom of the Thing and by the law of the land.

"Besides, I will tell thee something else which I mean to do," says Gunnar.

"What!" says Geir, "wilt thou challenge me to the island as thou art wont, and not bear the law?"

"Not that," says Gunnar; "I shall summon thee at the Hill of Laws for that thou calledst those men on the inquest who had no right to deal with Audulf's slaying, and I will declare thee for that guilty of outlawry."

Then Njal said, "Things must not take this turn, for the only end of it will be that this strife will be carried to the uttermost. Each of you, as it seems to me, has much on his side. There are some of these manslaughters, Gunnar, about which thou canst say nothing to hinder the court from finding thee guilty; but thou hast set on foot a suit against Geir, in which he, too, must be found guilty. Thou too, Geir the priest, shalt know that this suit of outlawry which hangs over thee shall not fall to the ground if thou wilt not listen to my words."

Thorod the priest said, "It seems to us as though the most peaceful way would be that a settlement and atonement were come to in the suit. But why sayest thou so little, Gizur the white?"

"It seems to me," says Gizur, "as though we shall need to have strong props for our suit; we may see, too, that Gunnar's friends stand near him, and so the best turn for us that things can take will be that good men and true should utter an award on the suit, if Gunnar so wills it."

"I have ever been willing to make matters up," says Gunnar; "and, besides, ye have much wrong to follow up, but still I think I was hard driven to do as I did."

And now the end of those suits was, by the counsel of the wisest men, that all the suits were put to arbitration; six men were to make this award, and it was uttered there and then at the Thing.

The award was that Skamkell should be unatoned. The blood money for Otkell's death was to be set off against the hurt Gunnar got from the spur; and as for the rest of the manslaughters, they were paid for after the worth of the men, and Gunnar's kinsmen gave money so that all the fines might be paid up at the Thing.

Then Geir the priest and Gizur the white went up and gave Gunnar pledges that they would keep the peace in good faith.

Gunnar rode home from the Thing, and thanked men for their help, and gave gifts to many, and got the greatest honour from the suit.

Now Gunnar sits at home in his honour.

CHAPTER LVII. OF STARKAD AND HIS SONS.

There was a man named Starkad; he was a son of Bork the waxytoothed-blade, the son of Thorkell clubfoot, who took the land round about Threecorner as the first settler. His wife's name was Hallbera. The sons of Starkad and Hallbera were these: Thorgeir and Bork and Thorkell. Hildigunna the leech was their sister.

They were very proud men in temper, hard-hearted and unkind. They treated men wrongfully.

There was a man named Egil; he was a son of Kol, who took land as a settler between Storlek and Reydwatn. The brother of Egil was Aunund of Witchwood, father of Hall the strong, who was at the slaying of Holt-Thorir with the sons of Kettle the smooth-tongued.

Egil kept house at Sandgil; his sons were these: Kol and Ottar and Hauk. Their mother's name was Steinvor; she was Starkad's sister.

Egil's sons were tall and strife-fueled; they were most unfair men. They were always on one side with Starkad's sons. Their sister was Gudruna night-sun, and she was the best-bred of women.

Egil had taken into his house two Easterlings; the one's name was Thorir and the other's Thorgrim. They were not long come out hither for the first time, and were wealthy and beloved by their friends; they were well skilled in arms, too, and dauntless in everything.

Starkad had a good horse of chesnut hue, and it was thought that no horse was his match in fight. Once it happened that these brothers from Sandgil were away under the Threecorner. They had much gossip about all the householders in the Fleetlithe, and they fell at last to asking whether there was any one that would fight a horse against them.

But there were some men there who spoke so as to flatter and honour them, that not only was there no one who would dare do that, but that there was no one that had such a horse.

Then Hildigunna answered, "I know that man who will dare to fight horses with you."

"Name him," they say.

"Gunnar has a brown horse," she says, "and he will dare to fight his horse against you, and against any one else."

"As for you women," they say, "you think no one can be Gunnar's match; but though Geir the priest or Gizur the white have come off with shame from before him, still it is not settled that we shall fall in the same way."

"Ye will fare much worse," she says; and so there arose out of this the greatest strife between them. Then Starkad said—

"My will is that ye try your hands on Gunnar last of all; for ye will find it hard work to go against his good luck."

"Thou wilt give us leave, though, to offer him a horse-fight?"

"I will give you leave, if ye play him no trick."

They said they would be sure to do what their father said.

Now they rode to Lithend; Gunnar was at home, and went out, and Kolskegg and Hjort went with him, and they gave them a hearty welcome, and asked whither they meant to go?

"No farther than hither," they say. "We are told that thou hast a good horse, and we wish to challenge thee to a horse-fight."

"Small stories can go about my horse," says Gunnar; "he is young and untried in every way."

"But still thou wilt be good enough to have the fight, for Hildigunna guessed that thou wouldst be easy in matching thy horse."

"How came ye to talk about that?" says Gunnar.

"There were some men," say they, "who were sure that no one would dare to fight his horse with ours."

"I would dare to fight him," says Gunnar; "but I think that was spitefully said."

"Shall we look upon the match as made, then?" they asked.

"Well, your journey will seem to you better if ye have your way in this; but still I will beg this of you, that we so fight our horses that we make sport for each other, but that no quarrel may arise from it, and that ye put no shame upon me; but if ye do to me as ye do to others, then there will be no help for it but that I shall give you such a buffet as it will seem hard to you to put up with. In a word, I shall do then just as ye do first."

Then they ride home. Starkad asked how their journey had gone off; they said that Gunnar had made their going good.

"He gave his word to fight his horse, and we settled when and where the horse-fight should be; but it was plain in everything that he thought he fell short of us, and he begged and prayed to get off."

"It will often be found," says Hildigunna, "that Gunnar is slow to be drawn into quarrels, but a hard hitter if he cannot avoid them."

Gunnar rode to see Njal, and told him of the horse-fight, and what words had passed between them, "But how dost thou think the horse-fight will turn out?"

"Thou wilt be uppermost," says Njal, "but yet many a man's bane will arise out of this fight."

"Will my bane perhaps come out of it?" asks Gunnar.

"Not out of this," says Njal; "but still they will bear in mind both the old and the new feud who fate against thee, and thou wilt have naught left, for it but to yield."

Then Gunnar rode home.

CHAPTER LVIII. HOW GUNNAR'S HORSE FOUGHT.

Just then Gunnar heard of the death of his father-in-law Hauskuld; a few nights after, Thorgerda, Thrain's wife, was delivered at Grit-water, and gave birth to a boy child. Then she sent a man to her mother, and bade her choose whether it should be called Glum or Hauskuld. She bade call it Hauskuld. So that name was given to the boy.

Gunnar and Hallgerda had two sons, the one's name was Hogni and the other's Grani. Hogni was a brave man of few words, distrustful and slow to believe, but truthful.

Now men ride to the horse-fight, and a very great crowd is gathered together there. Gunnar was there and his brothers, and the sons of Sigfus. Njal and all his sons. There too was come Starkad and his sons, and Egil and his sons, and they said to Gunnar that now they would lead the horses together.

Gunnar said, "That was well."

Skarphedinn said, "Wilt thou that I drive thy horse, kinsman Gunnar?"

"I will not have that," says Gunnar.

"It wouldn't be amiss though," says Skarphedinn; "we are hot-headed on both sides."

"Ye would say or do little," says Gunnar, "before a quarrel would spring up; but with me it will take longer, though it will be all the same in the end."

After that the horses were led together; Gunnar busked him to drive his horse, but Skarphedinn led him out. Gunnar was in a red kirtle, and had about his loins a broad belt, and a great riding-rod in his hand.

Then the horses run at one another, and bit each other long, so that there was no need for any one to touch them, and that was the greatest sport.

Then Thorgeir and Kol made up their minds that they would push their horse forward just as the horses rushed together, and see if Gunnar would fall before him.

Now the horses ran at one another again, and both Thorgeir and Kol ran alongside their horse's flank.

Gunnar pushes his horse against them, and what happened in a trice was this, that Thorgeir and his brother fall down flat on their backs, and their horse a-top of them.

Then they spring up and rush at Gunnar, Gunnar swings himself free and seizes Kol, casts him down on the field, so that he lies senseless, Thorgeir Starkad's son smote Gunnar's horse such a blow that one of his eyes started out. Gunnar smote Thorgeir with his riding-rod, and down falls Thorgeir senseless; but Gunnar goes to his horse, and said to Kolskegg, "Cut off the horse's head; he shall not live a maimed and blemished beast."

So Kolskegg cut the head off the horse.

Then Thorgeir got on his feet and took his weapons, and wanted to fly at Gunnar, but that was stopped, and there was a great throng and crush.

Skarphedinn said, "This crowd wearies me, and it is far more manly that men should fight it out with weapons"; and so he sang a song,—

At the Thing there is a throng;
Past all bounds the crowding comes;
Hard 'twill be to patch up peace
'Twixt the men: this wearies me;
Worthier is it far for men
Weapons red with gore to stain;
I for one would sooner tame
Hunger huge of cub of wolf.

Gunnar was still, so that one man held him, and spoke no ill words.

Njal tried to bring about a settlement, or to get pledges of peace; but Thorgeir said he would neither give nor take peace; far rather, he said, would he see Gunnar dead for the blow.

Kolskegg said, "Gunnar has before now stood too fast than that he should have fallen for words alone, and so it will be again."

Now men ride away from the horse-field, every one to his home. They make no attack on Gunnar, and so that half-year passed away. At the Thing, the summer after, Gunnar met Olaf the peacock, his cousin, and he asked him to come and see him,

but yet bade him beware of himself; "For," says he, "they will do us all the harm they can, and mind and fare always with many men at thy back."

He gave him much good counsel beside, and they agreed that there should be the greatest friendship between them.

CHAPTER LIX. OF ASGRIM AND WOLF UGGIS' SON.

Asgrim Ellidagrim's son had a suit to follow up at the Thing against Wolf Uggis' son. It was a matter of inheritance, Asgrim took it up in such a way as was seldom his wont; for there was a bar to his suit, and the bar was this, that he had summoned five neighbours to bear witness, when he ought to have summoned nine. And now they have this as their bar.

Then Gunnar spoke and said, "I will challenge thee to single combat on the island, Wolf Uggis' son, if men are not to get their rights by law; and Njal and my friend Helgi would like that I should take some share in defending thy cause, Asgrim, if they were not here themselves."

"But," says Wolf, "this quarrel is not one between thee and me."

"Still it shall be as good as though it were," says Gunnar.

And the end of the suit was, that Wolf had to pay down all the money.

Then Asgrim said to Gunnar, "I will ask thee to come and see me this summer, and I will ever be with thee in lawsuits, and never against thee."

Gunnar rides home from the Thing, and a little while after, he and Njal met, Njal besought Gunnar to be ware of himself, and said he had been told that those away under the Threecorner meant to fall on him, and bade him never go about with a small company, and always to have his weapons with him. Gunnar said so it should be, and told him that Asgrim had asked him to pay him a visit, "and I mean to go now this harvest."

"Let no men know before thou farest how long thou wilt be away," said Njal; "but, besides, I beg thee to let my sons ride with thee, and then no attack will be made on thee."

So they settled that among themselves.

"Now the summer wears away till it was eight weeks to winter," and then Gunnar says to Kolskegg, "Make thee ready to ride, for we shall ride to a feast at Tongue."

"Shall we say anything about it to Njal's sons?" said Kolskegg.

"No," says Gunnar; "they shall fall into no quarrels for me."

CHAPTER LX. AN ATTACK AGAINST GUNNAR AGREED ON.

They rode three together, Gunnar and his brothers. Gunnar had the bill and his sword, Oliver's gift; but Kolskegg had his short sword; Hjort, too, had proper weapons.

Now they rode to Tongue, and Asgrim gave them a hearty welcome, and they were there some while. At last they gave it out that they meant to go home there and then. Asgrim gave them good gifts, and offered to ride east with them, but Gunnar said there was no need of any such thing; and so he did not go.

Sigurd Swinehead was the name of a man who dwelt by Thurso water. He came to the farm under the Threecorner, for he had given his word to keep watch on Gunnar's doings, and so he went and told them of his journey home; "and," quoth he, "there could never be a finer chance than just now, when he has only two men with him."

"How many men shall we need to have to lie in wait for him?" says Starkad.

"Weak men shall be as nothing before him," he says; "and it is not safe to have fewer than thirty men."

"Where shall we lie in wait?"

"By Knafahills," he says; "there he will not see us before he comes on us."

"Go thou to Sandgil and tell Egil that fifteen of them must busk themselves thence, and now other fifteen will go hence to Knafahills."

Thorgeir said to Hildigunna, "This hand shall show thee Gunnar dead this very night."

"Nay, but I guess," says she, "that thou wilt hang thy head after ye two meet."

So those four, father and sons, fare away from the Threecorner, and eleven men besides, and they fared to Knafahills, and lay in wait there.

Sigurd Swinehead came to Sandgil and said, "Hither am I sent by Starkad and his sons to tell thee, Egil, that ye, father and sons, must fare to Knafahills to lie in wait for Gunnar."

"How many shall we fare in all?" says Egil.

"Fifteen, reckoning me," he says.

Kol said, "Now I mean to try my hand on Kolskegg."

"Then I think thou meanest to have a good deal on thy hands," says Sigurd.

Egil begged his Easterlings to fare with them. They said they had no quarrel with Gunnar; "and besides," says Thorir, "ye seem to need much help here, when a crowd of men shall go against three men."

Then Egil went away and was wroth.

Then the mistress of the house said to the Easterling: "In an evil hour hath my daughter Gudruna humbled herself, and broken the point of her maidenly pride, and lain by thy side as thy wife, when thou wilt not dare to follow thy father-in-law, and thou must be a coward," she says.

"I will go," he says, "with thy husband, and neither of us two shall come back."

After that he went to Thorgrim his messmate, and said, "Take thou now the keys of my chests; for I shall never unlock them again. I bid thee take for thine own whatever of our goods thou wilt; but sail away from Iceland, and do not think of revenge for me. But if thou dost not leave the land, it will be thy death."

So the Easterling joined himself to their band.

CHAPTER LXI. GUNNAR'S DREAM.

Now we must go back and say that Gunnar rides east over Thurso water, but when he had gone a little way from the river he grew very drowsy, and bade them lie down and rest there.

They did so. He fell fast asleep, and struggled much as he slumbered.

Then Kolskegg said, "Gunnar dreams now." But Hjort said, "I would like to wake him."

"That shall not be," said Kolskegg, "but he shall dream his dream out."

Gunnar lay a very long while, and threw off his shield from him, and he grew very warm. Kolskegg said, "What hast thou dreamt, kinsman?"

"That have I dreamt," says Gunnar, "which if I had dreamt it there I would never have ridden with so few men from Tongue."

"Tell us thy dream," says Kolskegg.

Then Gunnar sang a song.

Chief, that chargest foes in fight!
Now I fear that I have ridden
Short of men from Tongue, this harvest;
Raven's fast I sure shall break.
Lord, that scatters Ocean's fire!
This at least, I long to say,
Kite with wolf shall fight for marrow,
Ill I dreamt with wandering thought.

"I dreamt, methought, that I was riding on by Knafahills, and there I thought I saw many wolves, and they all made at me; but I turned away from them straight towards Rangriver, and then methought they pressed hard on me on all sides, but I kept them at bay, and shot all those that were foremost, till they came so close to me that I could not use my bow against them. Then I took my sword, and I smote with it with one hand, but thrust at them with my bill with the other. Shield myself then I did not, and methought then I knew not what shielded me. Then I slew many wolves, and thou, too, Kolskegg; but Hjort methought they pulled down, and tore open his breast, and one methought had his heart in his maw; but I grew so wroth that I hewed that wolf asunder just below the brisket, and after that methought the wolves turned and fled. Now my counsel is, brother Hjort, that thou ridest back west to Tongue."

"I will not do that," says Hjort; "though I know my death is sure, I will stand by thee still."

Then they rode and came east by Knafahills, and Kolskegg said—

"Seest thou, kinsman! many spears stand up by the hills, and men with weapons."

"It does not take me unawares," says Gunnar, "that my dream comes true."

"What is best to be done now?" says Kolskegg; "I guess thou wilt not run away from them."

"They shall not have that to jeer about," says Gunnar, "but we will ride on down to the ness by Rangriver; there is some vantage ground there."

Now they rode on to the ness, and made them ready there, and as they rode on past them Kol called out and said—

"Whither art thou running to now, Gunnar?"

But Kolskegg said, "Say the same thing farther on when this day has come to an end."

CHAPTER LXII. THE SLAYING OF HJORT AND FOURTEEN MEN.

After that Starkad egged on his men, and then they turn down upon them into the ness. Sigurd Swinehead came first and had a red targe, but in his other hand he held a cutlass. Gunnar sees him and shoots an arrow at him from his bow; he held the shield up aloft when he saw the arrow flying high, and the shaft passes through the shield and into his eye, and so came out at the nape of his neck, and that was the first man slain.

A second arrow Gunnar shot at Ulfhedinn, one of Starkad's men, and that struck him about the middle and he fell at the feet of a yeoman, and the yeoman over him. Kolskegg cast a stone and struck the yeoman on the head, and that was his death-blow.

Then Thorgeir Starkad's son said, "I will never answer our end that he should use his bow, but let us come on well and stoutly." Then each man egged on the other, and Gunnar guarded himself with his bow and arrows as long as he could; after that he throws them down, and then he takes his bill and sword and fights with both hands. There is long the hardest fight, but still Gunnar and Kolskegg slew man after man.

Then Thorgeir Starkad's son said, "I vowed to bring Hildigunna thy head, Gunnar!"

Then Gunnar sang a song—

Thou, that battle-sleet down bringeth,
Scarce I trow thou speakest truth;
She, the girl with golden armlets,
Cannot care for such a gift;
But, O serpent's hoard despoiler!
If the maid must have my head—
Maid whose wrist Rhine's fire wreatheth,
Closer come to crash of spear.

"She will not think that so much worth having," says Gunnar; "but still to get it thou wilt have to come nearer!"

Thorgeir said to his brothers—

"Let us run all of us upon him at once; he has no shield and we shall have his life in our hands."

So Bork and Thorkel both ran forward and were quicker than Thorgeir. Bork made a blow at Gunnar, and Gunnar threw his bill so hard in the way that the sword flew out of Bork's hand; then he sees Thorkel standing on his other hand within stroke of sword. Gunnar was standing with his body swayed a little on one side, and he makes a sweep with his sword, and caught Thorkel on the neck, and off flew his head.

Kol Egil's son said, "Let me get at Kolskegg," and turning to Kolskegg he said, "This I have often said, that we two would be just about an even match in fight."

"That we can soon prove," says Kolskegg.

Kol thrust at him with his spear; Kolskegg had just slain a man and had his hands full, and so he could not throw his shield before the blow, and the thrust came upon his thigh, on the outside of the limb and went through it.

Kolskegg turned sharp round, and strode towards him, and smote him with his short sword on the thigh, and cut off his leg, and said, "Did it touch thee or not?"

"Now," says Kol, "I pay for being bare of my shield."

So he stood a while on his other leg and looked at the stump.

"Thou needest not to look at it," said Kolskegg; "'tis even as thou seest, the leg is off."

Then Kol fell down dead.

But when Egil sees this, he runs at Gunnar and makes a cut at him; Gunnar thrusts at him with the bill and struck him in the middle, and Gunnar hoists him up on the bill and hurls him out into Rangriver.

Then Starkad said, "Wretch that thou art indeed, Thorir Easterling, when thou sittest by; but thy host and father-in-law Egil is slain."

Then the Easterling sprung up and was very wroth. Hjort had been the death of two men, and the Easterling leapt on him and smote him full on the breast. Then Hjort fell down dead on the spot.

Gunnar sees this and was swift to smite at the Easterling, and cuts him asunder at the waist.

A little while after Gunnar hurls the bill at Bork, and struck him in the middle, and the bill went through him and stuck in the ground.

Then Kolskegg cut off Hauk Egil's son's head, and Gunnar smites off Otter's hand at the elbow-joint. Then Starkad said—

"Let us fly now. We have not to do with men!"

Gunnar said, "Ye two will think it a sad story if there is naught on you to show that ye have both been in the battle."

Then Gunnar ran after Starkad and Thorgeir, and gave them each a wound. After that they parted; and Gunnar and his brothers had then wounded many men who got away from the field, but fourteen lost their lives, and Hjort the fifteenth.

Gunnar brought Hjort home, laid out on his shield, and he was buried in a cairn there. Many men grieved for him, for he had many dear friends.

Starkad came home, too, and Hildigunna dressed his wounds and Thorgeir's, and said, "Ye would have given a great deal not to have fallen out with Gunnar."

"So we would," says Starkad.

CHAPTER LXIII. NJAL'S COUNSEL TO GUNNAR.

Steinvor, at Sandgil, besought Thorgrim the Easterling to take in hand the care of her goods, and not to sail away from Iceland, and so to keep in mind the death of his messmate and kinsman.

"My messmate Thorir," said he, "foretold that I should fall by Gunnar's hand if I stayed here in the land, and he must have foreseen that when he foreknew his own death."

"I will give thee," she says, "Gudruna my daughter to wife, and all my goods into the bargain."

"I knew not," he said, "that thou wouldest pay such a long price."

After that they struck the bargain that he shall have her, and the wedding feast was to be the next summer.

Now Gunnar rides to Bergthorsknoll, and Kolskegg with him. Njal was out of doors and his sons, and they went to meet Gunnar and gave them a hearty welcome. After that they fell a-talking, and Gunnar said—

"Hither am I come to seek good counsel and help at thy hand."

"That is thy due," said Njal.

"I have fallen into a great strait," says Gunnar, "and slain many men, and I wish to know what thou wilt make of the matter?"

"Many will say this," said Njal, "that thou hast been driven into it much against thy will; but now thou shalt give me time to take counsel with myself."

Then Njal went away all by himself, and thought over a plan, and came back and said—

"Now have I thought over the matter somewhat, and it seems to me as though this must be carried through—if it be carried through at all—with hardihood and daring. Thorgeir has got my kinswoman Thorfinna with child, and I will hand over to thee the suit for seduction. Another suit of outlawry against Starkad I hand over also to thee, for having hewn trees in my wood on the Three-corner ridge. Both these suits shalt thou take up. Thou shalt fare too to the spot where ye fought, and dig up the dead, and name

witnesses to the wounds, and make all the dead outlaws, for that they came against thee with that mind to give thee and thy brothers wounds or swift death. But if this be tried at the Thing, and it be brought up against thee that thou first gave Thorgeir a blow, and so mayest neither plead thine own cause nor that of others, then I will answer in that matter, and say that I gave thee back thy rights at the Thingskala-Thing, so that thou shouldest be able to plead thine own suit as well as that of others, and then there will be an answer to that point. Thou shalt also go to see Tyrfring of Berianess, and he must hand over to thee a suit against Aunund of Witchwood, who has the blood feud after his brother Egil."

Then first of all Gunnar rode home; but a few nights after Njal's sons and Gunnar rode thither where the bodies were, and dug them up that were buried there. Then Gunnar summoned them all as outlaws for assault and treachery, and rode home after that.

CHAPTER LXIV. OF VALGARD AND MORD.

That same harvest Valgard the guileful came out to Iceland, and fared home to Hof. Then Thorgeir went to see Valgard and Mord, and told them what a strait they were in if Gunnar were to be allowed to make all those men outlaws whom he had slain.

Valgard said that must be Njal's counsel, and yet every thing had not come out yet which he was likely to have taught him.

Then Thorgeir begged those kinsmen for help and backing, but they held out a long while, and at last asked for and got a large sum of money.

That, too, was part of their plan, that Mord should ask for Thorkatla, Gizur the white's daughter, and Thorgeir was to ride at once west across the river with Valgard and Mord.

So the day after they rode twelve of them together and came to Mossfell. There they were heartily welcomed, and they put the question to Gizur about the wooing, and the end of it was that the match should be made, and the wedding feast was to be in half a month's space at Mossfell.

They ride home, and after that they ride to the wedding, and there was a crowd of guests to meet them, and it went off well. Thorkatla went home with Mord and took the housekeeping in hand but Valgard went abroad again the next summer.

Now Mord eggs on Thorgeir to set his suit on foot against Gunnar, and Thorgeir went to find Aunund; he bids him now to begin a suit for manslaughter for his brother Egil and his sons; "but I will begin one for the manslaughter of my brothers, and for the wounds of myself and my father."

He said he was quite ready to do that, and then they set out, and give notice of the manslaughter, and summon nine neighbours who dwell nearest to the spot where the deed was done. This beginning of the suit was heard of at Lithend; and then Gunnar rides to see Njal, and told him, and asked what he wished them to do next.

"Now," says Njal, "thou shalt summon those who dwell next to the spot, and thy neighbours; and call men to witness before the neighbours, and choose out Kol as the slayer in the manslaughter of Hjort thy brother: for that is lawful and right; then thou shalt give notice of the suit for manslaughter at Kol's hand, though he be dead. Then shall thou call men to witness, and summon the neighbours to ride to the Althing to bear witness of the fact, whether they, Kol and his companions, were on the spot, and in onslaught when Hjort was slain. Thou shalt also summon Thorgeir for the suit of seduction, and Aunund at the suit of Tyrfring."

Gunnar now did in everything as Njal gave him counsel. This men thought a strange beginning of suits, and now these matters come before the Thing. Gunnar rides to the Thing, and Njal's sons and the sons of Sigfus. Gunnar had sent messengers to his cousins and kinsmen, that they should ride to the Thing, and come with as many men as they could, and told them that this matter would lead to much strife. So they gathered together in a great band from the west.

Mord rode to the Thing and Runolf of the Dale, and those under the Threecorner, and Aunund of Witchwood. But when they come

to the Thing, they join them in one company with Gizur the white and Geir the priest.

CHAPTER LXV. OF FINES AND ATONEMENTS.

Gunnar, and the sons of Sigfus, and Njal's sons, went altogether in one band, and they marched so swiftly and closely that men who came in their way had to take heed lest they should get a fall; and nothing was so often spoken about over the whole Thing as these great lawsuits.

Gunnar went to meet his cousins, and Olaf and his men greeted him well. They asked Gunnar about the fight, but he told them all about it, and was just in all he said; he told them, too, what steps he had taken since.

Then Olaf said, "'Tis worth much to see how close Njal stands by thee in all counsel."

Gunnar said he should never be able to repay that, but then he begged them for help; and they said that was his due.

Now the suits on both sides came before the court, and each pleads his cause.

Mord asked—"How it was that a man could have the right to set a suit on foot who, like Gunnar, had already made himself an outlaw by striking Thorgeir a blow?"

"Wast thou," answered Njal, "at Thingskala-Thing last autumn?"

"Surely I was," says Mord.

"Heardest thou," asks Njal, "how Gunnar offered him full atonement? Then I gave back Gunnar his right to do all lawful deeds."

"That is right and good law," says Mord, "but how does the matter stand if Gunnar has laid the slaying of Hjort at Kol's door, when it was the Easterling that slew him?"

"That was right and lawful," says Njal, "when he chose him as the slayer before witnesses."

"That was lawful and right, no doubt," says Mord; "but for what did Gunnar summon them all as outlaws?"

"Thou needest not to ask about that," says Njal, "when they went out to deal wounds and manslaughter."

"Yes," says Mord, "but neither befell Gunnar."

"Gunnar's brothers," said Njal, "Kolskegg and Hjort, were there, and one of them got his death and the other a flesh wound."

"Thou speakest nothing but what is law," says Mord, "though it is hard to abide by it."

Then Hjallti Skeggis son of Thursodale, stood forth and said—

"I have had no share in any of your lawsuits; but I wish to know whether thou wilt do something, Gunnar, for the sake of my words and friendship."

"What askest thou?" says Gunnar.

"This," he says, "that ye lay down the whole suit to the award and judgment of good men and true."

"If I do so," said Gunnar, "then thou shalt never be against me, whatever men I may have to deal with."

"I will give my word to that," says Hjallti.

After that he tried his best with Gunnar's adversaries, and brought it about that they were all set at one again. And after that each side gave the other pledges of peace; but for Thorgeir's wound came the suit for seduction, and for the hewing in the wood, Starkad's wound. Thorgeir's brothers were atoned for by half fines, but half fell away for the onslaught on Gunnar. Egil's staying and Tyrfring's lawsuit were set off against each other. For Hjort's slaying, the slaying of Kol and of the Easterling were to come, and as for all the rest, they were atoned for with half fines.

Njal was in this award, and Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and Hjallti Skeggi's son.

Njal had much money out at interest with Starkad, and at Sandgil too, and he gave it all to Gunnar to make up these fines.

So many friends had Gunnar at the Thing, that he not only paid up there and then all the fines on the spot, but gave besides gifts to many chiefs who had lent him help; and he had the greatest honour from the suit; and all were agreed in this, that no man was his match in all the South Quarter.

So Gunnar rides home from the Thing and sits there in peace, but still his adversaries envied him much for his honour.

CHAPTER LXVI. OF THORGEIR OTKELL'S SON.

Now we must tell of Thorgeir Otkell's son; he grew up to be a tall strong man, true-hearted and guileless, but rather too ready to listen to fair words. He had many friends among the best men, and was much beloved by his kinsmen.

Once on a time Thorgeir Starkad's son had been to see his kinsman Mord.

"I can ill brook," he says, "that settlement of matters which we and Gunnar had, but I have bought thy help so long as we two are above ground; I wish thou wouldest think out some plan and lay it deep; this is why I say it right out, because I know that thou art Gunnar's greatest foe, and he too thine. I will much increase thine honour if thou takest pains in this matter."

"It will always seem as though I were greedy of gain, but so it must be. Yet it will be hard to take care that thou mayest not seem to be a truce-breaker, or peace-breaker, and yet carry out thy point. But now I have been told that Kolskegg means to try a suit, and regain a fourth part of Moeidsknoll, which was paid to thy father as an atonement for his son. He has taken up this suit for his mother, but this too is Gunnar's counsel, to pay in goods and not to let the land go. We must wait till this comes about, and then declare that he has broken the settlement made with you. He has also taken a cornfield from Thorgeir Otkell's son, and so broken the settlement with him too. Thou shalt go to see Thorgeir Otkell's son, and bring him into the matter with thee, and then fall on Gunnar; but if ye fail in aught of this, and cannot get him hunted down, still ye shall set on him over and over again, I must tell thee that Njal has 'spaed' his fortune, and foretold about his life, if he slays more than once in the same stock, that it would lead him to his death, if it so fell out that he broke the settlement made after the deed. Therefore shalt thou bring Thorgeir into the suit, because he has already slain his father; and now, if ye two are together in an affray, thou shalt shield thyself; but he will go boldly on, and then Gunnar will slay him. Then he has slain twice in the same stock, but thou shalt fly from the fight. And if this is to drag him to his death he will break the settlement afterwards, and so we may wait till then."

After that Thorgeir goes home and tells his father secretly. Then they agreed among themselves that they should work out this plot by stealth.

CHAPTER LXVII. OF THORGEIR STARKAD'S SON.

Sometime after Thorgeir Starkad's son fared to Kirkby to see his namesake, and they went aside to speak, and talked secretly all day; but at the end Thorgeir Starkad's son, gave his namesake a spear inlaid with gold, and rode home afterwards; they made the greatest friendship the one with the other.

At the Thingskala-Thing in the autumn, Kolskegg laid claim to the land at Moeidsknoll, but Gunnar took witness, and offered ready money, or another piece of land at a lawful price to those under the Threecorner.

Thorgeir took witness also, that Gunnar was breaking the settlement made between them.

After that the Thing was broken up, and so the next year wore away.

Those namesakes were always meeting, and there was the greatest friendship between them. Kolskegg spoke to Gunnar and said—

"I am told that there is great friendship between those namesakes, and it is the talk of many men that they will prove untrue, and I would that thou wouldest be ware of thyself"

"Death will come to me when it will come," says Gunnar, "wherever I may be, if that is my fate."

Then they left off talking about it.

About autumn, Gunnar gave out that they would work one week there at home, and the next down in the isles, and so make an end of their haymaking. At the same time, he let it be known that every man would have to leave the house, save himself and the women.

Thorgeir under Threecorner goes to see his namesake, but as soon as they met they began to talk after their wont, and Thorgeir Starkad's son, said—

"I would that we could harden our hearts and fall on Gunnar."

"Well," says Thorgeir Otkell's son, "every struggle with Gunnar has had but one end, that few have gained the day; besides, methinks it sounds ill to be called a peace-breaker."

"They have broken the peace, not we," says Thorgeir Starkad's son. "Gunnar took away from thee thy cornfield; and he has taken Moeidsknoll from my father and me."

And so they settle it between them to fall on Gunnar; and then Thorgeir said that Gunnar would be all alone at home in a few nights' space, "and then thou shalt come to meet me with eleven men, but I will have as many."

After that Thorgeir rode home.

CHAPTER LXVIII. OF NJAL AND THOSE NAMESAKES.

Now when Kolskegg and the house-carles had been three nights in the isles, Thorgeir Starkad's son had news of that, and sends word to his namesake that he should come to meet him on Threecorner ridge.

After that Thorgeir of the Threecorner busked him with eleven men; he rides up on the ridge and there waits for his namesake.

And now Gunnar is at home in his house, and those namesakes ride into a wood hard by. There such a drowsiness came over them that they could do naught else but sleep. So they hung their shields up in the boughs, and tethered their horses, and laid their weapons by their sides.

Njal was that night up in Thorolfssfell, and could not sleep at all, but went out and in by turns.

Thorhilda asked Njal why he could not sleep?

"Many things now flit before my eyes," said he; "I see many fetches of Gunnar's bitter foes, and what is very strange is this, they seem to be mad with rage, and yet they fare without plan or purpose."

A little after, a man rode up to the door and got off his horse's back and went in, and there was come the shepherd of Thorhilda and her husband.

"Didst thou find the sheep?" she asked.

"I found what might be more worth," said he.

"What was that?" asked Njal.

"I found twenty-four men up in the wood yonder; they had tethered their horses, but slept themselves. Their shields they had hung up in the boughs."

But so closely had he looked at them that he told of all their weapons and war-gear and clothes, and then Njal knew plainly who each of them must have been, and said to him—

"Twere good hiring if there were many such shepherds; and this shall ever stand to thy good; but still I will send thee on an errand."

He said at once he would go.

"Thou shalt go," says Njal, "to Lithend and tell Gunnar that he must fare to Gritwater, and then send after men; but I will go to meet with those who are in the wood and scare them away. This thing hath well come to pass, so that they shall gain nothing by this journey, but lose much."

The shepherd set off and told Gunnar as plainly as he could the whole story. Then Gunnar rode to Gritwater and summoned men to him.

Now it is to be told of Njal how he rides to meet these namesakes.

"Unwarily ye lie here," he says, "or for what end shall this journey have been made? And Gunnar is not a man to be trifled with. But if the truth must be told then, this is the greatest treason. Ye shall also know this, that Gunnar is gathering force, and he will come here in the twinkling of an eye, and slay you all, unless ye ride away home."

They bestirred them at once, for they were in great fear, and took their weapons, and mounted their horses and galloped home under the Threecorner.

Njal fared to meet Gunnar and bade him not to break up his company.

"But I will go and seek for an atonement; now they will be finely frightened; but for this treason no less a sum shall be paid when one has to deal with all of them, than shall be paid for the slaying of one or other of those namesakes, though such a thing should come to pass. This money I will take into my keeping, and so lay it out that it may be ready to thy hand when thou hast need of it."

CHAPTER LXIX. OLAF THE PEACOCK'S GIFTS TO GUNNAR.

Gunnar thanked Njal for his aid, and Njal rode away under the Threecorner, and told those namesakes that Gunnar would not break up his band of men before he had fought it out with them.

They began to offer terms for themselves, and were full of dread, and bade Njal to come between them with an offer of atonement.

Njal said that could only be if there were no guile behind. Then they begged him to have a share in the award, and said they would hold to what he awarded.

Njal said he would make no award unless it were at the Thing, and unless the best men were by; and they agreed to that.

Then Njal came between them, so that they gave each other pledges of peace and atonement.

Njal was to utter the award, and to name as his fellows those whom he chose.

A little while after those namesakes met Mord Valgard's son, and Mord blamed them much for having laid the matter in Njal's hands, when he was Gunnar's great friend. He said that would turn out ill for them.

Now men ride to the Althing after their wont, and now both sides are at the Thing.

Njal begged for a hearing, and asked all the best men who were come thither, what right at law they thought Gunnar had against those namesakes for their treason. They said they thought such a man had great right on his side.

Njal went on to ask, whether he had a right of action against all of them, or whether the leaders had to answer for them all in the suit?

They say that most of the blame would fall on the leaders, but a great deal still on them all.

"Many will say this," said Mord, "that it was not without a cause when Gunnar broke the settlement made with those namesakes."

"That is no breach of settlement," says Njal, "that any man should take the law against another; for with law shall our land be built up and settled, and with lawlessness wasted and spoiled."

Then Njal tells them that Gunnar had offered land for Moeid-sknoil, or other goods.

Then those namesakes thought they had been beguiled by Mord, and scolded him much, and said that this fine was all his doing.

Njal named twelve men as judges in the suit, and then every man paid a hundred in silver who had gone out, but each of those namesakes two hundred.

Njal took this money into his keeping, but either side gave the other pledges of peace, and Njal gave out the terms.

Then Gunnar rode from the Thing west to the Dales, till he came to Hjardarholt, and Olaf the peacock gave him a hearty welcome. There he sat half a month, and rode far and wide about the Dales, and all welcomed him with joyful hands. But at their parting Olaf said—

"I will give thee three things of price, a gold ring, and a cloak which Moorkjartan the Erse king owned, and a hound that was given me in Ireland; he is big, and no worse follower than a sturdy man. Besides, it is part of his nature that he has man's wit, and he will bay at every man whom he knows is thy foe, but never at thy friends; he can see, too, in any man's face, whether he means thee well or ill, and he will lay down his life to be true to thee. This hound's name is Sam."

After that he spoke to the hound, "Now shalt thou follow Gunnar, and do him all the service thou canst."

The hound went at once to Gunnar and laid himself down at his feet.

Olaf bade Gunnar to be ware of himself, and said he had many enviers, "For now thou art thought to be a famous man throughout all the land."

Gunnar thanked him for his gifts and good counsel, and rode home.

Now Gunnar sits at home for some time, and all is quiet.

CHAPTER LXX. MORD'S COUNSEL.

A little after, those namesakes and Mord met, and they were not at all of one mind. They thought they had lost much goods for Mord's sake, but had got nothing in return; and they bade him set on foot some other plot which might do Gunnar harm.

Mord said so it should be. "But now this is my counsel, that thou, Thorgeir Otkell's son shouldst beguile Ormilda, Gunnar's kinswoman; but Gunnar will let his displeasure grow against thee at that, and then I will spread that story abroad that Gunnar will not suffer thee to do such things."

"Then ye two shall some time after make an attack on Gunnar, but still ye must not seek him at home, for there is no thinking of that while the hound is alive."

So they settled this plan among them that it should be brought about.

Thorgeir began to turn his steps towards Ormilda, and Gunnar thought that ill, and great dislike arose between them.

So the winter wore away. Now comes the summer, and their secret meetings went on oftener than before.

As for Thorgeir of the Threecorner and Mord, they were always meeting; and they plan an onslaught on Gunnar, when he rides down to the isles to see after the work done by his house-carles.

One day Mord was ware of it when Gunnar rode down to the isles, and sent a man off under the Threecorner to tell Thorgeir that then would be the likeliest time to try to fall on Gunnar.

They bestirred them at once, and fare thence twelve together, but when they came to Kirkby there they found thirteen men waiting for them.

Then they made up their minds to ride down to Rangrifer and lie in wait there for Gunnar.

But when Gunnar rode up from the isles, Kolskegg rode with him. Gunnar had his bow and his arrows and his bill. Kolskegg had his short sword and weapons to match.

CHAPTER LXXI. THE SLAYING OF THORGEIR OTKELL'S SON.

That token happened as Gunnar and his brother rode up towards Rangrifer, that much blood burst out on the bill.

Kolskegg asked what that might mean.

Gunnar says, "If such tokens took place in other lands, it was called 'wound-drops,' and Master Oliver told me also that this only happened before great fights."

So they rode on till they saw men sitting by the river on the other side, and they had tethered their horses.

Gunnar said, "Now we have an ambush."

Kolskegg answered, "Long have they been faithless; but what is best to be done now?"

"We will gallop up alongside them to the ford," says Gunnar, "and there make ready for them."

The others saw that and turned at once towards them.

Gunnar strings his bow, and takes his arrows and throws them on the ground before him, and shoots as soon as ever they come within shot; by that Gunnar wounded many men, but some he slew.

Then Thorgeir Otkell's son spoke and said, "This is no use; let us make for him as hard as we can."

They did so, and first went Aunund the fair, Thorgeir's kinsman. Gunnar hurled the bill at him, and it fell on his shield and clove it in twain, but the bill rushed through Aunund. Augmund Shockhead rushed at Gunnar behind his back. Kolskegg saw that and cut off at once both Augmund's legs from under him, and

hurled him out into Rangriver, and he was drowned there and then.

Then a hard battle arose; Gunnar cut with one hand and thrust with the other. Kolskegg slew some men and wounded many.

Thorgeir's Starkad's son called out to his namesake, "It looks very little as though thou hadst a father to avenge."

"True it is," he answers, "that I do not make much way, but yet thou hast not followed in my footsteps; still I will not bear thy reproaches."

With that he rushes at Gunnar in great wrath, and thrust his spear through his shield, and so on through his arm.

Gunnar gave the shield such a sharp twist that the spearhead broke short off at the socket. Gunnar sees that another man was come within reach of his sword, and he smites at him and deals him his death-blow. After that, he clutches his bill with both hands; just then Thorgeir Otkell's son had come near him with a drawn sword, and Gunnar turns on him in great wrath, and drives the bill through him, and lifts him up aloft, and casts him out into Rangriver, and he drifts down towards the ford, and stuck fast there on a stone; and the name of that ford has since been Thorgeir's ford.

Then Thorgeir Starkad's son said, "Let us fly now; no victory will be fated to us this time."

So they all turned and fled from the field.

"Let us follow them up now," says Kolskegg, "and take thou thy bow and arrows, and thou wilt come within bow-shot of Thorgeir Starkad's son."

Then Gunnar sang a song.

Reaver of rich river-treasure,
Plundered will our purses be,
Though to-day we wound no other
Warriors wight in play of spears;
Aye, if I for all these sailors
Lowly lying, fines must pay—
This is why I hold my hand,
Hearken, brother dear, to me.

"Our purses will be emptied," says Gunnar, "by the time that these are atoned for who now lie here dead."

"Thou wilt never lack money," says Kolskegg; "but Thorgier will never leave off before he compasses thy death."

Gunnar sung another song.

Lord of water-skates that skim
Sea-king's fields, more good as he,
Shedding wounds' red stream, must stand
In my way ere I shall wince.
I, the golden armlets' warder,
Snakelike twined around my wrist,
Ne'er shall shun a foeman's faulchion
Flashing bright in din of fight.

"He, and a few more as good as he," says Gunnar, "must stand in my path ere I am afraid of them."

After that they ride home and tell the tidings.

Hallgerda was well pleased to hear them, and praised the deed much.

Rannveig said, "May be the deed is good; but somehow," she says, "I feel too downcast about it to think that good can come of it."

CHAPTER LXXII. OF THE SUITS FOR MANSLAUGHTER AT THE THING.

These tidings were spread far and wide, and Thorgeir's death was a great grief to many a man. Gizur the white and his men rode to the spot and gave notice of the manslaughter, and called the neighbours on the inquest to the Thing. Then they rode home west.

Njal and Gunnar met and talked about the battle. Then Njal said to Gunnar—

"Now be ware of thyself! Now hast thou slain twice in the same stock; and so now take heed to thy behaviour, and think that it is as much as thy life is worth, if thou dost not hold to the settlement that is made."

"Nor do I mean to break it in any way," says Gunnar, "but still I shall need thy help at the Thing."

"I will hold to my faithfulness to thee," said Njal, "till my death day."

Then Gunnar rides home. Now the Thing draws near; and each side gather a great company; and it is a matter of much talk at the Thing how these suits will end.

Those two, Gizur the white, and Geir the priest, talked with each other as to who should give notice of the suit of manslaughter after Thorgeir, and the end of it was that Gizur took the suit on his hand, and gave notice of it at the Hill of Laws, and spoke in these words:—

"I gave notice of a suit for assault laid down by law against Gunnar Hamond's son; for that he rushed with an onslaught laid down by law on Thorgeir Otkell's son, and wounded him with a body wound, which proved a death wound, so that Thorgeir got his death."

"I say on this charge he ought to become a convicted outlaw, not to be fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured in any need."

"I say that his goods are forfeited, half to me and half to the men of the Quarter, whose right it is by law to seize the goods of outlaws."

"I give notice of this charge in the Quarter Court, into which this suit ought by law to come."

"I give this lawful notice in the hearing of all men at the Hill of Laws."

"I give notice now of this suit, and of full forfeiture and outlawry against Gunnar Hamond's son."

A second time Gizur took witness, and gave notice of a suit against Gunnar Hamond's son, for that he had wounded Thorgeir Otkell's son with a body wound which was a death wound, and from which Thorgeir got his death, on such and such a spot when Gunnar first sprang on Thorgeir with an onslaught, laid down by law.

After that he gave notice of this declaration as he had done of the first. Then he asked in what Quarter Court the suit lay, and in what house in the district the defendant dwelt.

When that was over men left the Hill of Laws, and all said that he spoke well.

Gunnar kept himself well in hand and said little or nothing.

Now the Thing wears away till the day when the courts were to be set.

Then Gunnar stood looking south by the court of the men of Rangriver, and his men with him.

Gizur stood looking north, and calls his witnesses, and bade Gunnar to listen to his oath, and to his declaration of the suit, and to all the steps and proofs which he meant to bring forward. After that he took his oath, and then he brought forward the suit in the same shape before the court, as he had given notice of it before. Then he made them bring forward witness of the notice, then he bade the neighbours on the inquest to take their seats, and called upon Gunnar to challenge the inquest.

CHAPTER LXXIII. OF THE ATONEMENT.

Then Njal spoke and said—

"Now I can no longer sit still and take no part. Let us go to where the neighbours sit on the inquest."

They went thither and challenged four neighbours out of the inquest, but they called on the five that were left to answer the following question in Gunnar's favour "whether those namesakes had gone out with that mind to the place of meeting to do Gunnar a mischief if they could?"

But all bore witness at once that so it was.

Then Njal called this a lawful defence to the suit, and said he would bring forward proof of it unless they gave over the suit to arbitration.

Then many chiefs joined in praying for an atonement, and so it was brought about that twelve men should utter an award in the matter.

Then either side went and handselled this settlement to the other. Afterwards the award was made, and the sum to be paid settled, and it was all to be paid down then and there at the Thing.

But besides, Gunnar was to go abroad and Kolskegg with him, and they were to be away three winters; but if Gunnar did not go abroad when he had a chance of a passage, then he was to be slain by the kinsmen of those whom he had killed.

Gunnar made no sign, as though he thought the terms of atonement were not good. He asked Njal for that money which he had handed over to him to keep. Njal had laid the money out at interest and paid it down all at once, and it just came to what Gunnar had to pay for himself.

Now they ride home. Gunnar and Njal rode both together from the Thing, and then Njal said to Gunnar—

"Take good care, messmate, that thou keepest to this atonement, and bear in mind what we have spoken about; for though thy former journey abroad brought thee to great honour, this will be a far greater honour to thee. Thou wilt come back with great glory, and live to be an old man, and no man here will then tread on thy heel; but if thou dost not fare away, and so breakest thy atonement, then thou wilt be slain here in the land, and that is ill knowing for those who are thy friends."

Gunnar said he had no mind to break the atonement, and he rides home and told them of the settlement.

Rannveig said it was well that he fared abroad, for then they must find some one else to quarrel.

CHAPTER LXXIV. KOLSKEGG GOES ABROAD.

Thrain Sigfus' son said to his wife that he meant to fare abroad that summer. She said that was well. So he took his passage with Hogni the white.

Gunnar took his passage with Arnfin of the Bay; and Kolskegg was to go with him.

Grim And Helgi, Njal's sons, asked their father's leave to go abroad too, and Njal said—

"This foreign voyage ye will find hard work, so hard that it will be doubtful whether ye keep your lives; but still ye two will get some honour and glory, but it is not unlikely that a quarrel will arise out of your journey when ye come back."

Still they kept on asking their father to let them go, and the end of it was that he bade them go if they chose.

Then they got them a passage with Bard the black, and Olaf Kettle's son of Elda; and it is the talk of the whole country that all the better men in that district were leaving it.

By this time Gunnar's sons, Hogni and Grani, were grown up; they were men of very different turn of mind. Grani had much of his mother's temper, but Hogni was kind and good.

Gunnar made men bear down the wares of his brother and himself to the ship, and when all Gunnar's baggage had come down, and the ship was all but "boun," then Gunnar rides to Bergthorsknoll, and to other homesteads to see men, and thanked them all for the help they had given him.

The day after he gets ready early for his journey to the ship, and told all his people that he would ride away for good and all, and men took that much to heart, but still they said that they looked to his coming back afterwards.

Gunnar threw his arms round each of the household when he was "boun," and every one of them went out of doors with him; he leans on the butt of his spear and leaps into the saddle, and he and Kolskegg ride away.

They ride down along Markfleet, and just then Gunnar's horse tripped and threw him off. He turned with his face up towards the Lithe and the homestead at Lithend, and said—

"Fair is the Lithe; so fair that it has never seemed to me so fair; the corn fields are white to harvest, and the home mead is mown; and now I will ride back home, and not fare abroad at all."

"Do not this joy to thy foes," says Kolskegg, "by breaking thy atonement, for no man could think thou wouldst do thus, and thou mayst be sure that all will happen as Njal has said."

"I will not go away any whither," says Gunnar, "and so I would thou shouldst do too."

"That shall not be," says Kolskegg; "I will never do a base thing in this, nor in anything else which is left to my good faith; and this is that one thing that could tear us asunder; but tell this to

my kinsmen and to my mother, that I never mean to see Iceland again, for I shall soon learn that thou art dead, brother, and then there will be nothing left to bring me back."

So they parted there and then. Gunnar rides home to Lithend, but Kolskegg rides to the ship, and goes abroad.

Hallgerda was glad to see Gunnar when he came home, but his mother said little or nothing.

Now Gunnar sits at home that fall and winter, and had not many men with him.

Now the winter leaves the farmyard. Olaf the peacock asked Gunnar and Hallgerda to come and stay with him; but as for the farm, to put it into the hands of his mother and his son Hogni.

Gunnar thought that a good thing at first, and agreed to it, but when it came to the point he would not do it.

But at the Thing next summer, Gizur the white, and Geir the priest, gave notice of Gunnar's outlawry at the Hill of Laws; and before the Thing broke up Gizur summoned all Gunnar's foes to meet in the "Great Rift." He summoned Starkad under the Threecorner, and Thorgeir his son; Mord and Valgard the guileful; Geir the priest and Hjalti Skeggi's son; Thorbrand and Asbrand, Thorleik's sons; Eyjulf, and Aunund his son, Aunund of Witchwood and Thorgrim the Easterling of Sandgil.

Then Gizur spoke and said, "I will make you all this offer, that we go out against Gunnar this summer and slay him."

"I gave my word to Gunnar," said Hjalti, "here at the Thing, when he showed himself most willing to yield to my prayer, that I would never be in any attack upon him; and so it shall be."

Then Hjalti went away, but those who were left behind made up their minds to make an onslaught on Gunnar, and shook hands on the bargain, and laid a fine on any one that left the undertaking.

Mord was to keep watch and spy out when there was the best chance of falling on him, and they were forty men in this league, and they thought it would be a light thing for them to hunt down Gunnar, now that Kolskegg was away, and Thrain and many other of Gunnar's friends.

Men ride from the Thing, and Njal went to see Gunnar, and told him of his outlawry, and how an onslaught was planned against him.

"Me thinks thou art the best of friends," says Gunnar; "thou makest me aware of what is meant."

"Now," says Njal, "I would that Skarphedinn should come to thy house, and my son Hauskuld; they will lay down their lives for thy life."

"I will not," says Gunnar, "that thy sons should be slain for my sake, and thou hast a right to look for other things from me."

"All thy care will come to nothing," says Njal; "quarrels will turn thitherward where my sons are as soon as thou art dead and gone."

"That is not unlikely," says Gunnar, "but still it would mislike me that they fell into my son for me; but this one thing I will ask of thee, that ye see after my son Hogni, but I say naught of Grani, for he does not behave himself much after my mind."

Njal rode home, and gave his word to do that.

It is said that Gunnar rode to all meetings of men, and to all lawful Things, and his foes never dared to fall on him.

And so some time went on that he went about as a free and guiltless man.

CHAPTER LXXV. THE RIDING TO LITHEND.

Next autumn Mord Valgard's son, sent word that Gunnar would be all alone at home, but all his people would be down in the isles to make an end of their haymaking. Then Gizur the white and Geir the priest rode east over the rivers as soon as ever they heard that, and so east across the sands to Hof. Then they sent word to Starkad under the Threecorner, and there they all met who were to fall on Gunnar, and took counsel how they might best bring it about.

Mord said that they could not come on Gunnar unawares, unless they seized the farmer who dwelt at the next homestead, whose name was Thorkell, and made him go against his will with them to lay hands on the hound Sam, and unless he went before them to the homestead to do this.

Then they set out east for Lithend, but sent to fetch Thorkell. They seized him and bound him, and gave him two choices—one that they would slay him, or else he must lay hands on the hound; but he chooses rather to save his life, and went with them.

There was a beaten sunk road, between fences, above the farm yard at Lithend, and there they halted with their band. Master Thorkell went up to the homestead, and the tyke lay on the top of the house, and he entices the dog away with him into a deep hollow in the path. Just then the hound sees that there are men before them, and he leaps on Thorkell and tears his belly open.

Aunund of Witchwood smote the hound on the head with his axe, so that the blade sunk into the brain. The hound gave such a great howl that they thought it passing strange, and he fell down dead.

CHAPTER LXXVI. GUNNAR'S SLAYING.

Gunnar woke up in his hall and said—

"Thou hast been sorely treated, Sam, my fosterling, and this warning is so meant that our two deaths will not be far apart."

Gunnar's hall was made all of wood, and roofed with beams above, and there were window-slits under the beams that carried the roof, and they were fitted with shutters.

Gunnar slept in a loft above the hall, and so did Hallgerda and his mother.

Now when they were come near to the house they knew not whether Gunnar were at home, and bade that some one would go straight up to the house and see if he could find out. But the rest sat them down on the ground.

Thorgrim the Easterling went and began to climb up on the hall; Gunnar sees that a red kirtle passed before the window-slit, and thrusts out the bill, and smote him on the middle. Thorgrim's feet slipped from under him, and he dropped his shield, and down he toppled from the roof.

Then he goes to Gizur and his band as they sat on the ground.

Gizur looked at him and said—

"Well, is Gunnar at home?"

"Find that out for yourselves," said Thorgrim; "but this I am sure of, that his bill is at home," and with that he fell down dead.

Then they made for the buildings. Gunnar shot out arrows at them, and made a stout defence, and they could get nothing done. Then some of them got into the out-houses and tried to attack him thence, but Gunnar found them out with his arrows there also, and still they could get nothing done.

So it went on for while, then they took a rest, and made a second onslaught. Gunnar still shot out at them, and they could do nothing, and fell off the second time. Then Gizur the white said—

"Let us press on harder; nothing comes of our onslaught."

Then they made a third bout of it, and were long at it, and then they fell off again.

Gunnar said, "There lies on arrow outside on the wall, and it is one of their shafts; I will shoot at them with it, and it will be a shame to them if they get a hurt from their own weapons."

His mother said, "Do not so, my son; nor rouse them again when they have already fallen off from the attack."

But Gunnar caught up the arrow and shot it after them, and struck Eylif Aunund's son, and he got a great wound; he was standing all by himself, and they knew not that he was wounded.

"Out came an arm yonder," says Gizur, "and there was a gold ring on it, and took an arrow from the roof and they would not look outside for shafts if there were enough in doors; and now ye shall make a fresh onslaught."

"Let us burn him house and all," said Mord.

"That shall never be," says Gizur, "though I knew that my life lay on it; but it is easy for thee to find out some plan, such a cunning man as thou art said to be."

Some ropes lay there on the ground, and they were often used to strengthen the roof. Then Mord said—"Let us take the ropes and throw one end over the end of the carrying beams, but let us fasten the other end to these rocks and twist them tight with levers, and so pull the roof off the hall."

So they took the ropes and all lent a hand to carry this out, and before Gunnar was aware of it, they had pulled the whole roof off the hall.

Then Gunnar still shoots with his bow so that they could never come nigh him. Then Mord said again that they must burn the house over Gunnar's head. But Gizur said—

"I know not why thou wilt speak of that which no one else wishes, and that shall never be."

Just then Thorbrand Thorleik's son sprang up on the roof, and cuts asunder Gunnar's bowstring. Gunnar clutches the bill with both hands, and turns on him quickly and drives it through him, and hurls him down on the ground.

Then up sprung Asbrand his brother. Gunnar thrusts at him with the bill, and he threw his shield before the blow, but the bill passed clean through the shield and broke both his arms, and down he fell from the wall.

Gunnar had already wounded eight men and slain those twain. By that time Gunnar had got two wounds, and all men said that he never once winced either at wounds or death.

Then Gunnar said to Hallgerda, "Give me two locks of thy hair, and ye two, my mother and thou, twist them together into a bow-string for me."

"Does aught lie on it?" she says.

"My life lies on it," he said; "for they will never come to close quarters with me if I can keep them off with my bow."

"Well!" she says, "now I will call to thy mind that slap on the face which thou gavest me; and I care never a whit whether thou holdest out a long while or a short."

Then Gunnar sang a song—

Each who hurls the gory javelin
Hath some honour of his own,
Now my helpmeet wimple-hooded
Hurries all my fame to earth.
No one owner of a war-ship
Often asks for little things,
Woman, fond of Frodi's flour,
Wends her hand as she is wont.

"Every one has something to boast of," says Gunnar, "and I will ask thee no more for this."

"Thou behavest ill," said Rannveig, "and this shame shall long be had in mind."

Gunnar made a stout and bold defence, and now wounds other eight men with such sore wounds that many lay at death's door. Gunnar keeps them all off until he fell worn out with toil. Then they wounded him with many and great wounds, but still he got away out of their hands, and held his own against them a while longer, but at last it came about that they slew him.

Of this defence of his, Thorkell the Skald of Göta-Elf sang in the verses which follow—

We have heard how south in Iceland
Gunnar guarded well himself,
Boldly battle's thunder wielding,
Fiercest Iceman on the wave;
Hero of the golden collar,
Sixteen with the sword he wounded;
In the shock that Odin loveth,
Two before him lasted death.

But this is what Thormod Olaf's son sang—

None that scattered sea's bright sunbeams,
Won more glorious fame than Gunnar,
So runs fame of old in Iceland,
Fitting fame of heathen men;
Lord of fight when helms were crashing,
Lives of foeman twain he took,
Wielding bitter steel he sorely
Wounded twelve, and four besides.

Then Gizur spoke and said: "We have now laid low to earth a mighty chief, and hard work has it been, and the fame of this defence of his shall last as long as men live in this land."

After that he went to see Rannveig and said, "Wilt thou grant us earth here for two of our men who are dead, that they may lie in a cairn here?"

"All the more willingly for two," she says, "because I wish with all my heart I had to grant it to all of you."

"It must be forgiven thee," he says, "to speak thus, for thou hast had a great loss."

Then he gave orders that no man should spoil or rob anything there.

After that they went away.

Then Thorgeir Starkad's son said, "We may not be in our house at home for the sons of Sigfus, unless thou Gizur or thou Geir be here south some little while."

"This shall be so," says Gizur, and they cast lots, and the lot fell on Geir to stay behind.

After that he came to the Point, and set up his house there; he had a son whose name was Hroald; he was base born, and his mother's name was Biartey; he boasted that he had given Gunnar his death-blow. Hroald was at the Point with his father.

Thorgeir Starkad's son boasted of another wound which he had given to Gunnar.

Gizur sat at home at Mossfell. Gunnar's slaying was heard of, and ill spoken of throughout the whole country, and his death was a great grief to many a man.

CHAPTER LXXVII. GUNNAR SINGS A SONG DEAD.

Njal could ill brook Gunnar's death, nor could the sons of Sigfus brook it either.

They asked whether Njal thought they had any right to give notice of a suit of manslaughter for Gunnar, or to set the suit on foot.

He said that could not be done, as the man had been outlawed; but said it would be better worth trying to do something to wound their glory, by slaying some men in vengeance after him.

They cast a cairn over Gunnar, and made him sit upright in the cairn. Rannveig would not hear of his bill being buried in the cairn, but said he alone should have it as his own, who was ready to avenge Gunnar. So no one took the bill.

She was so hard on Hallgerda, that she was on the point of killing her; and she said that she had been the cause of her son's slaying.

Then Hallgerda fled away to Gritwater, and her son Grani with her, and they shared the goods between them; Hogni was to have the land at Lithend and the homestead on it, but Grani was to have the land let out on lease.

Now this token happened at Lithend, that the neat-herd and the serving-maid were driving cattle by Gunnar's cairn. They thought that he was merry, and that he was singing inside the cairn. They went home and told Rannveig, Gunnar's mother, of this token, but she bade them go and tell Njal.

Then they went over to Bergthorsknoll and told Njal, but he made them tell it three times over.

After that, he had a long talk all alone with Skarphedinn; and Skarphedinn took his weapons and goes with them to Lithend.

Rannveig and Hogni gave him a hearty welcome, and were very glad to see him. Rannveig asked him to stay there some time, and he said he would.

He and Hogni were always together, at home and abroad. Hogni was a brisk, brave man, well-bred and well-trained in mind and body, but distrustful and slow to believe what he was told, and that was why they dared not tell him of the token.

Now those two, Skarphedinn and Hogni, were out of doors one evening by Gunnar's cairn on the south side. The moon and stars were shining clear and bright, but every now and then the clouds drove over them. Then all at once they thought they saw the cairn standing open, and lo! Gunnar had turned himself in the cairn and looked at the moon. They thought they saw four lights burning in the cairn, and none of them threw a shadow. They saw that Gunnar was merry, and he wore a joyful face. He sang a song, and so loud, that it might have been heard though they had been farther off.

He that lavished rings in largesse,
When the fight's red rain-drops fell,
Bright of face, with heart-strings hardy,
Hogni's father met his fate;
Then his brow with helmet shrouding,

Bearing battle-shield, he spake,
"I will die the prop of battle,
Sooner die than yield an inch.
Yes, sooner die than yield an inch."

After that the cairn was shut up again.

"Wouldst thou believe these tokens if Njal or I told them to thee?" says Skarphedinn.

"I would believe them," he says, "if Njal told them, for it is said he never lies."

"Such tokens as these mean much," says Skarphedinn, "when he shows himself to us, he who would sooner die than yield to his foes; and see how he has taught us what we ought to do."

"I shall be able to bring nothing to pass," says Hogni, "unless thou wilt stand by me."

"Now," says Skarphedinn, "will I bear in mind how Gunnar behaved after the slaying of your kinsman Sigmund; now I will yield you such help as I may. My father gave his word to Gunnar to do that whenever thou or thy mother had need of it."

After that they go home to Lithend.

CHAPTER LXXVIII. GUNNAR OF LITHEND AVENGED.

"Now we shall set off at once," says Skarphedinn, "this very night; for if they learn that I am here, they will be more wary of themselves."

"I will fulfil thy counsel," says Hogni.

After that they took their weapons when all men were in their beds. Hogni takes down the bill, and it gave a sharp ringing sound. Rannveig sprang up in great wrath and said—

"Who touches the bill, when I forbade every one to lay hand on it?"

"I mean," says Hogni, "to bring it to my father, that he may bear it with him to Valhalla, and have it with him when the warriors meet."

"Rather shalt thou now bear it," she answered, "and avenge thy father; for the bill has spoken of one man's death or more."

Then Hogni went out, and told Skarphedinn all the words that his grandmother had spoken.

After that they fare to the Point, and two ravens flew along with them all the way. They came to the Point while it was still night. Then they drove the flock before them up to the house, and then Hroald and Tjorfi ran out and drove the flock up the hollow path, and had their weapons with them.

Skarphedinn sprang up and said, "Thou needest not to stand and think if it be really as it seems. Men are here."

Then Skarphedinn smites Tjorfi his death-blow. Hroald had a spear in his hand, and Hogni rushes at him; Hroald thrusts at him, but Hogni hewed asunder the spear-shaft with his bill, and drives the bill through him.

After that they left them there dead, and turn away thence under the Threecorner.

Skarphedinn jumps up on the house and plucks the grass, and those who were inside the house thought it was cattle that had come on the roof. Starkad and Thorgeir took their weapons and upper clothing, and went out and round about the fence of the yard. But when Starkad sees Skarphedinn he was afraid, and wanted to turn back.

Skarphedinn cut him down by the fence. Then Hogni comes against Thorgeir and slays him with the bill.

Thence they went to Hof, and Mord was outside in the field, and begged for mercy, and offered them full atonement.

Skarphedinn told Mord the slaying of those four men, and sang a song.

Four who wielded warlike weapons
We have slain, all men of worth,
Them at once, gold-greedy fellow,
Thou shalt follow on the spot;
Let us press this pinch-purse so,
Pouring fear into his heart;
Wretch! reach out to Gunnar's son
Right to settle all disputes.

"And the like journey," says Skarphedinn, "shalt thou also fare, or hand over to Hogni the right to make his own award, if he will take these terms."

Hogni said his mind had been made up not to come to any terms with the slayers of his father; but still at last he took the right to make his own award from Mord.

CHAPTER LXXIX. HOGNI TAKES AN ATONEMENT FOR GUNNAR'S DEATH.

Njal took a share in bringing those who had the blood-feud after Starkad and Thorgeir to take an atonement, and a district meeting was called together, and men were chosen to make the award, and every matter was taken into account, even the attack on Gunnar, though he was an outlaw; but such a fine as was awarded, all that Mord paid; for they did not close their award against him before the other matter was already settled, and then they set off one award against the other.

Then they were all set at one again, but at the Thing there was great talk, and the end of it was, that Geir the priest and Hogni were set at one again, and that atonement they held to ever afterwards.

Geir the priest dwelt in the Lithe till his death-day, and he is out of the story.

Njal asked as a wife for Hogni Alfeida the daughter of Weatherlid the Skald, and she was given away to him. Their son was Ari, who sailed for Shetland, and took him a wife there; from him is come Einar the Shetlander, one of the briskest and boldest of men.

Hogni kept up his friendship with Njal, and he is now out of the story.

CHAPTER LXXX. OF KOLSKEGG: HOW HE WAS BAPTISED.

Now it is to be told of Kolskegg how he comes to Norway, and is in the Bay east that winter. But the summer after he fares east to Denmark, and bound himself to Sweyn Forkbeard the Dane-king, and there he had great honour.

One night he dreamt that a man came to him; he was bright and glistening, and he thought he woke him up. He spoke, and said to him—

"Stand up and come with me."

"What wilt thou with me?" he asks.

"I will get thee a bride, and thou shalt be my knight."

He thought he said yea to that, and after that he woke up.

Then he went to a wizard and told him the dream, but he read it so that he should fare to southern lands and become God's knight.

Kolskegg was baptised in Denmark, but still he could not rest there, but fared east to Russia, and was there one winter. Then he fared thence out to Micklegarth, and there took service with the Emperor. The last that was heard of him was, that he wedded a wife there, and was captain over the Varangians, and stayed there till his death-day; and he, too, is out of this story.

CHAPTER LXXXI. OF THRAIN: HOW HE SLEW KOL.

Now we must take up the story, and say how Thrain Sigfus' son came to Norway. They made the land north in Helgeland, and held on south to Drontheim, and so to Hlada. But as soon as Earl Hacon heard of that, he sent men to them, and would know what men were in the ship. They came back and told him who the men were. Then the Earl sent for Thrain Sigfus' son, and he went to see him. The Earl asked of what stock he might be. He said that he was Gunnar of Lithend's near kinsman. The Earl said—

"That shall stand thee in good stead; for I have seen many men from Iceland, but none his match."

"Lord," said Thrain, "is it your will that I should be with you this winter?"

The Earl took to him, and Thrain was there that winter, and was thought much of.

There was a man named Kol, he was a great sea-rover. He was the son of Asmund Ashside, east out of Smoland. He lay east in the Göta-Elf, and had five ships, and much force.

Thence Kol steered his course out of the river to Norway, and landed at Fold, in the bight of the "Bay," and came on Hallvard Soti unawares, and found him in a loft. He kept them off bravely till they set fire to the house, then he gave himself up; but they slew him, and took there much goods, and sailed thence to Lödese.

Earl Hacon heard these tidings, and made them make Kol an outlaw over all his realm, and set a price upon his head.

Once on a time it so happened that the Earl began to speak thus—

"Too far off from us now is Gunnar of Lithend. He would slay my outlaw if he were here; but now the Icelanders will slay him, and it is ill that he hath not fared to us."

Then Thrain Sigfus' son answered—

"I am not Gunnar, but still I am near akin to him, and I will undertake this voyage."

The Earl said, "I should be glad of that, and thou shalt be very well fitted out for the journey."

After that his son Eric began to speak, and said—

"Your word, father, is good to many men, but fulfilling it is quite another thing. This is the hardest undertaking; for this sea-rover is tough and ill to deal with, wherefore thou wilt need to take great pains, both as to men and ships for this voyage."

Thrain said, "I will set out on this voyage, though it looks ugly."

After that the Earl gave him five ships, and all well trimmed and manned. Along with Thrain was Gunnar Lambi's son, and Lambi Sigurd's son. Gunnar was Thrain's brother's son, and had come to him young, and each loved the other much.

Eric, the Earl's son, went heartily along with them, and looked after strength for them, both in men and weapons, and made such changes in them as he thought were needful. After they were "boun," Eric got them a pilot. Then they sailed south along the land; but wherever they came to land, the Earl allowed them to deal with whatever they needed as their own.

So they held on east to Lödese, and then they heard that Kol was gone to Denmark. Then they shaped their course south thither; but when they came south to Helsingborg, they met men in a boat, who said that Kol was there just before them, and would be staying there for a while.

One day when the weather was good, Kol saw the ships as they sailed up towards him, and said he had dreamt of Earl Hacon the night before, and told his people he was sure these must be his men, and bade them all to take their weapons.

After that they busked them, and a fight arose; and they fought long, so that neither side had the mastery.

Then Kol sprang up on Thrain's ship, and cleared the gangways fast, and slays many men. He had a gilded helm.

Now Thrain sees that this is no good, and now he eggs on his men to go along with him, but he himself goes first and meets Kol.

Kol hews at him, and the blow fell on Thrain's shield, and cleft it down from top to bottom. Then Kol got a blow on the arm from a stone, and then down fell his sword.

Thrain hews at Kol, and the stroke came on his leg so that it cut it off. After that they slew Kol, and Thrain cut off his head, and they threw the trunk over-board, but kept his head.

There they took much spoil, and then they held on north to Drontheim, and go to see the Earl.

The Earl gave Thrain a hearty welcome, and he showed the Earl Kol's head, but the Earl thanked him for that deed.

Eric said it was worth more than words alone, and the Earl said so it was, and bade them come along with him.

They went thither, where the Earl had made them make a good ship that was not made like a common long-ship. It had a vulture's head, and was much carved and painted.

"Thou art a great man for show, Thrain," said the Earl, "and so have both of you, kinsmen, been, Gunnar and thou; and now I will give thee this ship, but it is called the 'Vulture'. Along with it shall go my friendship; and my will is that thou stayest with me as long as thou wilt."

He thanked him for his goodness, and said he had no longing to go to Iceland just yet.

The Earl had a journey to make to the marches of the land to meet the Swede-king. Thrain went with him that summer, and was a shipmaster and steered the Vulture, and sailed so fast that few could keep up with him, and he was much envied. But it always came out that the Earl laid great store on Gunnar, for he set down sternly all who tried Thrain's temper.

So Thrain was all that winter with the Earl, but next spring the Earl asked Thrain whether he would stay there or fare to Iceland; but Thrain said he had not yet made up his mind, and said that he wished first to know tidings from Iceland.

The Earl said that so it should be as he thought it suited him best; and Thrain was with the Earl.

Then those tidings were heard from Iceland, which many thought great news, the death of Gunnar of Lithend. Then the Earl would not that Thrain should fare out to Iceland, and so there he stayed with him.

CHAPTER LXXXII. NJAL'S SONS SAIL ABROAD.

Now it must be told how Njal's sons, Grim and Helgi, left Iceland the same summer that Thrain and his fellows went away; and in the ship with them were Olaf Kettle's son of Elda, and Bard the black. They got so strong a wind from the north that they were driven south into the main; and so thick a mist came over them that they could not tell whither they were driving, and they were out a long while. At last they came to where was a great ground sea, and thought then they must be near land. So then Njal's sons asked Bard if he could tell at all to what land they were likely to be nearest.

"Many lands there are," said he, "which we might hit with the weather we have had—the Orkneys, or Scotland, or Ireland."

Two nights after, they saw land on both boards, and a great surf running up in the firch. They cast anchor outside the breakers, and the wind began to fall; and next morning it was calm. Then they see thirteen ships coming out to them.

Then Bard spoke and said, "What counsel shall we take now, for these men are going to make an onslaught on us?"

So they took counsel whether they should defend themselves or yield, but before they could make up their minds, the Vikings were upon them. Then each side asked the other their names, and what their leaders were called. So the leaders of the chapmen told their names, and asked back who led that host. One called himself Gritgard, and the other Snowcolf, sons of Moldan of Duncansby in Scotland, kinsmen of Malcolm the Scot king.

"And now," says Gritgard, "we have laid down two choices, one that ye go on shore, and we will take your goods; the other is, that we fall on you and slay every man that we can catch."

"The will of the chapmen," answers Helgi, "is to defend themselves."

But the chapmen called out, "Wretch that thou art to speak thus! What defence can we make? Lading is less than life."

But Grim, he fell upon a plan to shout out to the Vikings, and would not let them hear the bad choice of the chapmen.

Then Bard and Olaf said, "Think ye not that these Icelanders will make game of you sluggards; take rather your weapons and guard your goods."

So they all seized their weapons, and bound themselves, one with another, never to give up so long as they had strength to fight.

CHAPTER LXXXIII. OF KARI SOLMUND'S SON.

Then the Vikings shot at them and the fight began, and the chapmen guard themselves well. Snowcolf sprang aboard and at Olaf, and thrust his spear through his body, but Grim thrust at Snowcolf with his spear, and so stoutly, that he fell over-board. Then Helgi turned to meet Grim, and they too drove down all the Vikings as they tried to board, and Njal's sons were ever where there was most need. Then the Vikings called out to the chapmen and bade

them give up, but they said they would never yield. Just then some one looked seaward, and there they see ships coming from the south round the Ness, and they were not fewer than ten, and they row hard and steer thitherwards. Along their sides were shield on shield, but on that ship that came first stood a man by the mast, who was clad in a silken kirtle, and had a gilded helm, and his hair was both fair and thick; that man had a spear inlaid with gold in his hand.

He asked, "Who have here such an uneven game?"

Helgi tells his name, and said that against them are Gritgard and Snowcolf.

"But who are your captains?" he asks.

Helgi answered, "Bard the black, who lives, but the other, who is dead and gone, was called Olaf."

"Are ye men from Iceland?" says he.

"Sure enough we are," Helgi answers.

He asked whose sons they were, and they told him, then he knew them and said—

"Well known names have ye all, father and sons both."

"Who art thou?" asks Helgi.

"My name is Kari, and I am Solmund's son."

"Whence comest thou?" says Helgi.

"From the Southern Isles."

"Then thou art welcome," says Helgi, "if thou wilt give us a little help."

"I'll give ye all the help ye need," says Kari; "but what do ye ask?"

"To fall on them," says Helgi.

Kari says that so it shall be. So they pulled up to them, and then the battle began the second time; but when they had fought a little while, Kari springs up on Snowcolf's ship; he turns to meet him and smites at him with his sword. Kari leaps nimbly backwards over a beam that lay athwart the ship, and Snowcolf smote the beam so that both edges of the sword were hidden. Then Kari smites at him, and the sword fell on his shoulder, and the stroke was so mighty that he cleft in twain shoulder, arm, and all, and Snowcolf got his death there and then. Gritgard hurled a spear at Kari, but Kari saw it and sprang up aloft, and the spear missed him. Just then Helgi and Grim came up both to meet Kari, and Helgi springs on Gritgard and thrusts his spear through him, and that was his death blow; after that they went round the whole ship on both boards, and then men begged for mercy. So they gave them all peace, but took all their goods. After that they ran all the ships out under the islands.

CHAPTER LXXXIV. OF EARL SIGURD.

Sigurd was the name of an earl who ruled over the Orkneys; he was the son of Hlodver, the son of Thorfinn the scull-splitter, the son of Turf-Einar, the son of Rognvald, Earl of M[oe]ren, the son of Eystein the noisy. Kari was one of Earl Sigurd's body-guard, and had just been gathering scatts in the Southern Isles from Earl Gilli. Now Kari asks them to go to Hrossey, and said the Earl would take to them well. They agreed to that, and went with Kari and came to Hrossey. Kari led them to see the Earl, and said what men they were.

"How came they," says the Earl, "to fall upon thee?"

"I found them," says Kari, "in Scotland's Firths, and they were fighting with the sons of Earl Moldan, and held their own so well that they threw themselves about between the bulwarks, from side to side, and were always there where the trial was greatest, and now I ask you to give them quarters among your body-guard."

"It shall be as thou choosest," says the Earl, "thou hast already taken them so much by the hand."

Then they were there with the Earl that winter, and were worthily treated, but Helgi was silent as the winter wore on. The Earl could not tell what was at the bottom of that, and asked why he was so silent, and what was on his mind.

"Thinkest thou it not good to be here?"

"Good, methinks, it is here," he says.

"Then what art thou thinking about?" asks the Earl.

"Hast thou any realm to guard in Scotland?" asks Helgi.

"So we think," says the Earl, "but what makes thee think about that, or what is the matter with it?"

"The Scots," says Helgi, "must have taken your steward's life, and stopped all the messengers; that none should cross the Pentland Firth."

"Hast thou the second sight?" said the Earl.

"That has been little proved," answers Helgi.

"Well," says the Earl, "I will increase thy honour if this be so, otherwise thou shalt smart for it."

"Nay," says Kari, "Helgi is not that kind of man, and like enough his words are sooth, for his father has the second sight."

After that the Earl sent men south to Straumey to Arnljot, his steward there, and after that Arnljot sent them across the Pentland Firth, and they spied out and learnt that Earl Hundi and Earl Melsnati had taken the life of Havard in Thraswick, Earl Sigurd's brother-in-law. So Arnljot sent word to Earl Sigurd to come south with a great host and drive those earls out of his realm, and as soon as the Earl heard that, he gathered together a mighty host from all the isles.

CHAPTER LXXXV. THE BATTLE WITH THE EARLS.

After that the Earl set out south with his host, and Kari went with him, and Njal's sons too. They came south to Caithness. The Earl had these realms in Scotland, Ross and Moray, Sutherland, and the Dales. There came to meet them men from those realms, and said that the Earls were a short way off with a great host. Then Earl Sigurd turns his host thither, and the name of that place is Duncansness, above which they met, and it came to a great battle between them. Now the Scots had let some of their host go free from the main battle, and these took the Earl's men in flank, and many men fell there till Njal's sons turned against the foe, and fought with them and put them to flight; but still it was a hard fight, and then Njal's sons turned back to the front by the Earl's standard, and fought well. Now Kari turns to meet Earl Melsnati, and Melsnati hurled a spear at him, but Kari caught the spear and threw it back and through the Earl. Then Earl Hundi fled, but they chased the fleers until they learnt that Malcolm was gathering a host at Duncansby. Then the Earl took counsel with his men, and it seemed to all the best plan to turn back, and not to fight with such a mighty land force; so they turned back. But when the Earl came to Straumey they shared the battle-spoil. After that he went north to Hrossey, and Njal's sons and Kari followed him. Then the Earl made a great feast, and at that feast he gave Kari a good sword, and a spear inlaid with gold; but he gave Helgi a gold ring and a mantle, and Grim a shield and sword. After that he took Helgi and Grim into his body-guard, and thanked them for their good help. They were with the Earl that winter and the summer after, till Kari went sea-roving; then they went with him, and harried far and wide that summer, and everywhere won the victory. They fought against Godred, King of Man, and conquered him; and after that they fared back, and had gotten much goods. Next winter they were still with the Earl, and when the spring came Njal's sons asked leave to go to Norway. The Earl said they should go or not as they pleased, and he gave them a good ship and smart men. As for Kari, he said he must come that summer to Norway with Earl Hacon's scatts, and then they would meet; and so it fell out that they gave each other their word to meet. After that Njal's sons put out to sea and sailed for Norway, and made the land north near Drontheim.

CHAPTER LXXXVI. HRAPP'S VOYAGE FROM ICELAND.

There was a man named Kolbein, and his surname was Arnljot's son; he was a man from Drontheim; he sailed out to Iceland that same summer in which Kolskegg and Njal's sons went abroad. He was that winter east in Broaddale; but the spring after, he made his ship ready for sea in Gautawick; and when men were almost "boun," a man rowed up to them in a boat, and made the boat fast to the ship, and afterwards he went on board the ship to see Kolbein.

Kolbein asked that man for his name.

"My name is Hrapp," says he.

"What wilt thou with me?" says Kolbein.

"I wish to ask thee to put me across the Iceland main."

"Whose son art thou?" asks Kolbein.

"I am a son of Aurgunleid, the son of Geirolf the fighter."

"What need lies on thee," asked Kolbein, "to drive thee abroad?"

"I have slain a man," says Hrapp.

"What manslaughter was that," says Kolbein, "and what men have the blood-feud?"

"The men of Weaponfirth," says Hrapp, "but the man I slew was Aurlyg, the son of Aurlyg, the son of Roger the white."

"I guess this," says Kolbein, "that he will have the worst of it who bears thee abroad."

"I am the friend of my friend," said Hrapp, "but when ill is done to me I repay it. Nor am I short of money to lay down for my passage."

Then Kolbein took Hrapp on board, and a little while after a fair breeze sprung up, and they sailed away on the sea.

Hrapp ran short of food at sea, and then he sate him down at the mess of those who were nearest to him. They sprang up with ill words, and so it was that they came to blows, and Hrapp, in a trice, has two men under him.

Then Kolbein was told, and he bade Hrapp to come and share his mess, and he accepted that.

Now they come off the sea, and lie outside off Agdirness.

Then Kolbein asked where that money was which he had offered to pay for his fare?

"It is out in Iceland," answers Hrapp.

"Thou wilt beguile more men than me, I fear," says Kolbein; "but now I will forgive thee all the fare."

Hrapp bade him have thanks for that. "But what counsel dost thou give as to what I ought to do?"

"That first of all," he says, "that thou goest from the ship as soon as ever thou canst, for all Easterlings will bear thee bad witness; but there is yet another bit of good counsel which I will give thee, and that is, never to cheat thy master."

Then Hrapp went on shore with his weapons, and he had a great axe with an iron-bound haft in his hand.

He fares on and on till he comes to Gudbrand of the Dale. He was the greatest friend of Earl Hacon. They two had a shrine between them, and it was never opened but when the Earl came thither. That was the second greatest shrine in Norway, but the other was at Hlada.

Thrand was the name of Gudbrand's son, but his daughter's name was Gudruna.

Hrapp went in before Gudbrand, and hailed him well. He asked whence he came and what was his name. Hrapp told him about himself, and how he had sailed abroad from Iceland.

After that he asks Gudbrand to take him into his household as a guest.

"It does not seem," said Gudbrand, "to look on thee, as though thou wert a man to bring good luck."

"Methinks, then," says Hrapp, "that all I have heard about thee has been great lies; for it is said that thou takest every one into thy house that asks thee; and that no man is thy match for goodness and kindness, far or near; but now I shall have to speak against that saying, if thou dost not take me in."

"Well, thou shalt stay here," said Gudbrand.

"To what seat wilt thou show me?" says Hrapp.

"To one on the lower bench, over against my high seat."

Then Hrapp went and took his seat. He was able to tell of many things, and so it was at first that Gudbrand and many thought it sport to listen to him; but still it came about that most men thought him too much given to mocking, and the end of it was that he took to talking alone with Gudruna, so that many said that he meant to beguile her.

But when Gudbrand was aware of that, he scolded her much for daring to talk alone with him, and bade her beware of speaking aught to him if the whole household did not hear it. She gave her word to be good at first, but still it was soon the old story over again as to their talk. Then Gudbrand got Asvard, his overseer, to go about with her, out of doors and in, and to be with her wherever she went. One day it happened that she begged for leave to go

into the nut-wood for a pastime, and Asvard went along with her. Hrapp goes to seek for them and found them, and took her by the hand, and led her away alone.

Then Asvard went to look for her, and found them both together stretched on the grass in a thicket.

He rushes at them, axe in air, and smote at Hrapp's leg, but Hrapp gave himself a second turn, and he missed him. Hrapp springs on his feet as quick as he can, and caught up his axe. Then Asvard wished to turn and get away, but Hrapp hewed asunder his backbone.

Then Gudruna said, "Now hast thou done that deed which will hinder thy stay any Longer with my father; but still there is something behind which he will like still less, for I go with child."

"He shall not learn this from others," says Hrapp, "but I will go home and tell him both these tidings."

"Then," she says, "thou wilt not come away with thy life."

"I will run the risk of that," he says.

After that he sees her back to the other women, but he went home. Gudbrand sat in his high seat, and there were few men in the hall.

Hrapp went in before him, and bore his axe high.

"Why is thine axe bloody?" asks Gudbrand.

"I made it so by doing a piece of work on thy overseer Asvard's back," says Hrapp.

"That can be no good work," says Gudbrand; "thou must have slain him."

"So it is, be sure," says Hrapp.

"What did ye fall out about?" asks Gudbrand.

"Oh!" says Hrapp, "what you would think small cause enough. He wanted to hew off my leg."

"What hast thou done first?" asked Gudbrand.

"What he had no right to meddle with," says Hrapp.

"Still thou wilt tell me what it was."

"Well!" said Hrapp, "if thou must know, I lay by thy daughter's side, and he thought that bad."

"Up men!" cried Gudbrand, "and take him. He shall be slain out of hand."

"Very little good wilt thou let me reap of my son-in-lawship," says Hrapp, "but thou hast not so many men at thy back as to do that speedily."

Up they rose, but he sprang out of doors. They run after him, but he got away to the wood, and they could not lay hold of him.

Then Gudbrand gathers people, and lets the wood be searched; but they find him not, for the wood was great and thick.

Hrapp fares through the wood till he came to a clearing; there he found a house, and saw a man outside cleaving wood.

He asked that man for his name, and he said his name was Tofi.

Tofi asked him for his name in turn, and Hrapp told him his true name.

Hrapp asked why the householder had set up his abode so far from other men?

"For that here," he says, "I think I am less likely to have brawls with other men."

"It is strange how we beat about the bush in our talk," says Hrapp, "but I will first tell thee who I am. I have been with Gudbrand of the Dale, but I ran away thence because I slew his overseer; but now I know that we are both of us bad men; for thou wouldst not have come hither away from other men unless thou wert some man's outlaw. And now I give thee two choices, either that I will tell where thou art, or that we two have between us, share and share alike, all that is here."

"This is even as thou sayest," said the householder; "I seized and carried off this woman who is here with me, and many men have sought for me."

Then he led Hrapp in with him; there was a small house there, but well built.

The master of the house told his mistress that he had taken Hrapp into his company.

"Most men will get ill luck from this man," she says; "but thou wilt have thy way."

So Hrapp was there after that. He was a great wanderer, and was never at home. He still brings about meetings with Gudruna; her father and brother, Thrand and Gudbrand, lay in wait for him,

but they could never get nigh him, and so all that year passed away.

Gudbrand sent and told Earl Hacon what trouble he had had with Hrapp, and the Earl let him be made an outlaw, and laid a price upon his head. He said too, that he would go himself to look after him; but that passed off, and the Earl thought it easy enough for them to catch him when he went about so unwarily.

CHAPTER LXXXVII. THRAIN TOOK TO HRAPP.

That same summer Njal's sons fared to Norway from the Orkneys, as was before written, and they were there at the fair during the summer. Then Thrain Sigfus' son busked his ship for Iceland, and was all but "boun." At that time Earl Hacon went to a feast at Gudbrand's house. That night Killing-Hrapp came to the shrine of Earl Hacon and Gudbrand, and he went inside the house, and there he saw Thorgerda Shrinebride sitting, and she was as tall as a full-grown man. She had a great gold ring on her arm, and a wimple on her head; he strips her of her wimple, and takes the gold ring from off her. Then he sees Thor's car, and takes from him a second gold ring; a third he took from Irpa; and then dragged them all out, and spoiled them of all their gear.

After that he laid fire to the shrine, and burnt it down, and then he goes away just as it began to dawn. He walks across a ploughed field, and there six men sprung up with weapons, and fall upon him at once; but he made a stout defence, and the end of the business was that he slays three men, but wounds Thrand to the death, and drives two to the woods, so that they could bear no news to the Earl. He then went up to Thrand and said—

"It is now in my power to slay thee if I will, but I will not do that; and now I will set more store by the ties that are between us than ye have shown to me."

Now Hrapp means to turn back to the wood, but now he sees that men have come between him and the wood, so he dares not venture to turn thither, but lays him down in a thicket, and so lies there a while.

Earl Hacon and Gudbrand went that morning early to the shrine and found it burnt down; but the three gods were outside, stripped of all their bravery.

Then Gudbrand began to speak, and said—

"Much might is given to our gods, when here they have walked of themselves out of the fire!"

"The gods can have naught to do with it," says the Earl; "a man must have burnt the shrine, and borne the gods out; but the gods do not avenge everything on the spot. That man who has done this will no doubt be driven away out of Valhalla, and never come in thither."

Just then up ran four of the Earl's men, and told them ill tidings; for they said they had found three men slain in the field, and Thrand wounded to the death.

"Who can have done this?" says the Earl.

"Killing-Hrapp," they say.

"Then he must have burnt down the shrine," says the Earl.

They said they thought he was like enough to have done it.

"And where may he be now?" says the Earl.

They said that Thrand had told them that he had laid down in a thicket.

The Earl goes thither to look for him, but Hrapp was off and away. Then the Earl set his men to search for him, but still they could not find him. So the Earl was in the hue and cry himself, but first he bade them rest a while.

Then the Earl went aside by himself, away from other men, and bade that no man should follow him, and so he stays a while. He fell down on both his knees, and held his hands before his eyes; after that he went back to them, and then he said to them, "Come with me."

So they went along with him. He turns short away from the path on which they had walked before, and they came to a dell. There up sprang Hrapp before them, and there it was that he had hidden himself at first.

The Earl urges on his men to run after him, but Hrapp was so swift-footed that they never came near him. Hrapp made for

Hlada. There both Thrain and Njal's sons lay "boun" for sea at the same time. Hrapp runs to where Njal's sons are.

"Help me, like good men and true," he said, "for the Earl will slay me."

Helgi looked at him and said—

"Thou lookest like an unlucky man, and the man who will not take thee in will have the best of it."

"Would that the worst might befall you from me," says Hrapp.

"I am the man," says Helgi, "to avenge me on thee for this as time rolls on."

Then Hrapp turned to Thrain Sigfus' son, and bade him shelter him.

"What hast thou on thy hand?" says Thrain.

"I have burnt a shrine under the Earl's eyes, and slain some men, and now he will be here speedily, for he has joined in the hue and cry himself."

"It hardly beseems me to do this," says Thrain, "when the Earl has done me so much good."

Then he showed Thrain the precious things which he had borne out of the shrine, and offered to give him the goods, but Thrain said he could not take them unless he gave him other goods of the same worth for them.

"Then," said Hrapp, "here will I take my stand, and here shall I be slain before thine eyes, and then thou wilt have to abide by every man's blame."

Then they see the Earl and his band of men coming, and then Thrain took Hrapp under his safeguard, and let them shove off the boat, and put out to his ship.

Then Thrain said, "Now this will be thy best hiding place, to knock out the bottoms of two casks, and then thou shalt get into them."

So it was done, and he got into the casks, and then they were lashed together, and lowered over-board.

Then comes the Earl with his band of Njal's sons, and asked if Hrapp had come there.

They said that he had come.

The Earl asked whither he had gone thence.

They said they had not kept eyes on him, and could not say.

"He," said the Earl, "should have great honour from me who would tell me where Hrapp was."

Then Grim said softly to Helgi—

"Why should we not say. What know I whether Thrain will repay us with any good?"

"We should not tell a whit more for that," says Helgi, "when his life lies at stake."

"Maybe," said Grim, "the Earl will turn his vengeance on us, for he is so wroth that some one will have to fall before him."

"That must not move us," says Helgi, "but still we will pull our ship out, and so away to sea as soon as ever we get a wind."

So they rowed out under an isle that lay there, and wait there for a fair breeze.

The Earl went about among the sailors, and tried them all, but they, one and all, denied that they knew aught of Hrapp.

Then the Earl said, "Now we will go to Thrain, my brother-in-arms, and he will give Hrapp up, if he knows anything of him."

After that they took a long-ship and went off to the merchant ship.

Thrain sees the Earl coming, and stands up and greets him kindly. The Earl took his greeting well and spoke thus—

"We are seeking for a man whose name is Hrapp, and he is an Iclander. He has done us all kind of ill; and now we will ask you to be good enough to give him up, or to tell us where he is."

"Ye know, Lord," said Thrain, "that I slew your outlaw, and then put my life in peril, and for that I had of you great honour."

"More honour shalt thou now have," says the Earl.

Now Thrain thought within himself, and could not make up his mind how the Earl would take it, so he denies that Hrapp is there, and bade the Earl to look for him. He spent little time on that, and went on land alone, away from other men, and was then very wroth, so that no man dared to speak to him.

"Show me to Njal's sons," said the Earl, "and I will force them to tell me the truth."

Then he was told that they had put out of the harbour.

"Then there is no help for it," says the Earl, "but still there were two water-casks alongside of Thrain's ship, and in them a man may well have been hid, and if Thrain has hidden him, there he must be; and now we will go a second time to see Thrain."

Thrain sees that the Earl means to put off again and said—

"However wroth the Earl was last time, now he will be half as wroth again, and now the life of every man on board the ship lies at stake."

They all gave their words to hide the matter, for they were all sore afraid. Then they took some sacks out of the lading, and put Hrapp down into the hold in their stead, and other sacks that were tight were laid over him.

Now comes the Earl, just as they were done stowing Hrapp away. Thrain greeted the Earl well. The Earl was rather slow to return it, and they saw that the Earl was very wroth.

Then said the Earl to Thrain—

"Give thou up Hrapp, for I am quite sure that thou hast hidden him."

"Where shall I have hidden him, Lord?" says Thrain.

"That thou knowest best," says the Earl; "but if I must guess, then I think that thou hiddest him in the water-casks a while ago."

"Well!" says Thrain, "I would rather not be taken for a liar, far sooner would I that ye should search the ship."

Then the Earl went on board the ship and hunted and hunted, but found him not.

"Dost thou speak me free now?" says Thrain. "Far from it," says the Earl, "and yet I cannot tell why we cannot find him, but methinks I see through it all when I come on shore, but when I come here, I can see nothing."

With that he made them row him ashore. He was so wroth that there was no speaking to him. His son Sweyn was there with him, and he said, "A strange turn of mind this to let guiltless men smart for one's wrath!"

Then the Earl went away alone aside from other men, and after that he went back to them at once, and said—

"Let us row out to them again," and they did so.

"Where can he have been hidden?" says Sweyn.

"There's not much good in knowing that," says the Earl, "for now he will be away thence; two sacks lay there by the rest of the lading, and Hrapp must have come into the lading in their place."

Then Thrain began to speak, and said—

"They are running off the ship again, and they must mean to pay us another visit. Now we will take him out of the lading, and stow other things in his stead, but let the sacks still lie loose. They did so, and then Thrain spoke—

"Now let us fold Hrapp in the sail."

It was then brailed up to the yard, and they did so.

Then the Earl comes to Thrain and his men, and he was very wroth, and said, "Wilt thou now give up the man, Thrain?" and he is worse now than before.

"I would have given him up long ago," answers Thrain, "if he had been in my keeping, or where can he have been?"

"In the lading," says the Earl.

"Then why did ye not seek him there?" says Thrain.

"That never came into our mind," says the Earl.

After that they sought him over all the ship, and found him not.

"Will you now hold me free?" says Thrain.

"Surely not," says the Earl, "for I know that thou hast hidden away the man, though I find him not; but I would rather that thou shouldst be a dastard to me than I to thee," says the Earl, and then they went on shore.

"Now," says the Earl, "I seem to see that Thrain has hidden away Hrapp in the sail."

Just then up sprung a fair breeze, and Thrain and his men sailed out to sea. He then spoke these words which have long been held in mind since—

Let us make the Vulture fly,
Nothing now gars Thrain flinch.

But when the Earl heard of Thrain's words, then he said—

"Tis not my want of foresight which caused this, but rather their ill-fellowship, which will drag them both to death."

Thrain was a short time out on the sea, and so came to Iceland, and fared home to his house. Hrapp went along with Thrain, and was with him that year; but the spring after, Thrain got him a homestead at Hrappstede, and he dwelt there; but yet he spent most of his time At Gritwater. He was thought to spoil everything there, and some men even said that he was too good friends with Hallgerda, and that he led her astray, but some spoke against that.

Thrain gave the Vulture to his kinsman, Mord the reckless; that Mord slew Oddi Haldor's son, east in Gautawick by Berufirth.

All Thrain's kinsmen looked on him as a chief.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII. EARL HACON FIGHTS WITH NJAL'S SONS.

Now we must take up the story, and say how, when Earl Hacon missed Thrain, he spoke to Sweyn his son, and said—

"Let us take four long-ships, and let us fare against Njal's sons and slay them, for they must have known all about it with Thrain."

"Tis not good counsel," says Sweyn, "to throw the blame on guiltless men, but to let him escape who is guilty."

"I shall have my way in this," says the Earl.

Now they hold on after Njal's sons, and seek for them, and find them under an island.

Grim first saw the Earl's ships and said to Helgi—

"Here are war ships sailing up, and I see that here is the Earl, and he can mean to offer us no peace."

"It is said," said Helgi, "that he is the boldest man who holds his own against all comers, and so we will defend ourselves."

They all bade him take the course he thought best, and then they took to their arms.

Now the Earl comes up and called out to them, And bade them give themselves up.

Helgi said that they would defend themselves so long as they could.

Then the Earl offered peace and quarter to all who would neither defend themselves nor Helgi; but Helgi was so much beloved that all said they would rather die with him.

Then the Earl and his men fall on them, but they defended themselves well, and Njal's sons were ever where there was most need. The Earl often offered peace, but they all made the same answer, and said they would never yield.

Then Aslak of Longisle pressed them hard, and came on board their ship thrice. Then Grim said—

"Thou pressest on hard, and 'twere well that thou gettest what thou seekest;" and with that he snatched up a spear and hurled it at him, and hit him under the chin, and Aslak got his death wound there and then.

A little after, Helgi slew Egil the Earl's banner-bearer.

Then Sweyn, Earl Bacon's son, fell on them, and made men hem them in and bear them down with shields, and so they were taken captive.

The Earl was for letting them all be slain at once, but Sweyn said that should not be, and said too that it was night.

Then the Earl said, "Well, then, slay them to-morrow, but bind them fast to-night."

"So, I ween, it must be," says Sweyn; "but never yet have I met briskier men than these, and I call it the greatest manscath to take their lives."

"They have slain two of our briskest men," said the Earl, "and for that they shall be slain."

"Because they were brisker men themselves," says Sweyn; "but still in this it must be done as thou wilt."

So they were bound and fettered.

After that the Earl fell asleep; but when all men slept, Grim spoke to Helgi, and said, "Away would I get if I could."

"Let us try some trick then," says Helgi.

Grim sees that there lies an axe edge up, so Grim crawled thither, and gets the bowstring which bound him cut asunder against the axe, but still he got great wounds on his arms.

Then he set Helgi loose, and after that they crawled over the ship's side, and got on shore, so that neither Hacon nor his men were ware of them. Then they broke off their fetters and walked away to the other side of the island. By that time it began to dawn.

There they found a ship, and knew that there was come Kari Solmund's son. They went at once to meet him, and told him of their wrongs and hardships, and showed him their wounds, and said the Earl would be then asleep.

"Ill is it," said Karl, "that ye should suffer such wrongs for wicked men; but what now would be most to your minds?"

"To fall on the Earl," they say, "and slay him."

"This will not be fated," says Kari; "but still ye do not lack heart, but we will first know whether he is there now."

After that they fared thither, and then the Earl was up and away.

Then Kari sailed in to Hlada to meet the Earl, and brought him the Orkney scatts; so the Earl said—

"Hast thou taken Njal's sons into thy keeping?"

"So it is, sure enough," says Kari.

"Wilt thou hand Njal's sons over to me?" asks the Earl.

"No, I will not," said Kari.

"Wilt thou swear this," says the Earl, "that thou wilt not fall on me with Njal's sons?"

Then Eric, the Earl's son, spoke and said—

"Such things ought not to be asked. Kari has always been our friend, and things should not have gone as they have, had I been by. Njal's sons should have been set free from all blame, but they should have had chastisement who had wrought for it. Methinks now it would be more seemly to give Njal's sons good gifts for the hardships and wrongs which have been put upon them, and the wounds they have got."

"So it ought to be, sure enough," says the Earl, "but I know not whether they will take an atonement."

Then the Earl said that Kari should try the feeling of Njal's sons as to an atonement.

After that Kari spoke to Helgi, and asked whether he would take any amends from the Earl or not.

"I will take them," said Helgi, "from his son Eric, but I will have nothing to do with the Earl."

Then Kari told Eric their answer.

"So it shall be," says Eric. "He shall take the amends from me if he thinks it better; and tell them this too, that I bid them to my house, and my father shall do them no harm."

This bidding they took, and went to Eric's house, and were with him till Kari was ready to sail west across the sea to meet Earl Sigurd.

Then Eric made a feast for Kari, and gave him gifts, and Njal's sons gifts too. After that Kari fared west across the sea, and met Earl Sigurd, and he greeted them very well, and they were with the Earl that winter.

But when the spring came, Kari asked Njal's sons to go on warfare with him, but Grim said they would only do so if he would fare with them afterwards out to Iceland. Kari gave his word to do that, and then they fared with him a-sea-roving. They harried south about Anglesea and all the Southern isles. Thence they held on to Cantyre, and landed there, and fought with the landsmen, and got thence much goods, and so fared to their ships. Thence they fared south to Wales, and harried there. Then they held on for Man, and there they met Godred, and fought with him, and got the victory, and slew Dungal the king's son. There they took great spoil. Thence they held on north to Coll, and found Earl Gilli there, and he greeted them well, and there they stayed with him a while. The Earl fared with them to the Orkneys to meet Earl Sigurd, but next spring Earl Sigurd gave away his sister Nereida to Earl Gilli, and then he fared back to the Southern isles.

CHAPTER LXXXIX. NJAL'S SONS AND KARI COME OUT TO ICELAND.

That summer Kari and Njal's sons busked them for Iceland, and when they were "all-boun" they went to see the Earl. The Earl gave them good gifts, and they parted with great friendship.

Now they put to sea and have a short passage, and they got a fine fair breeze, and made the land at Eyrar. Then they got their horses and ride from the ship to Bergthorsknoll, but when they came home all men were glad to see them. They flitted home their

goods and laid up the ship, and Kari was there that winter with Njal.

But the spring after, Kari asked for Njal's daughter, Helga, to wife, and Helgi and Grim backed his suit; and so the end of it was that she was betrothed to Kari, and the day for the wedding-feast was fixed, and the feast was held half a month before mid-summer, and they were that winter with Njal.

Then Kari bought him land at Dyrholms, east away by Mydale, and set up a farm there; they put in there a grieve and housekeeper to see after the farm, but they themselves were ever with Njal.

CHAPTER XC. THE QUARREL OF NJAL'S SONS WITH THRAIN SIGFUS' SON.

Hrapp owned a farm at Hrappstede, but for all that he was always at Gritwater, and he was thought to spoil everything there. Thrain was good to him.

Once on a time it happened that Kettle of the Mark was at Bergthorsknull; then Njal's sons told him of their wrongs and hardships, and said they had much to lay at Thrain Sigfus' son's door, whenever they chose to speak about it.

Njal said it would be best that Kettle should talk with his brother Thrain about it, and he gave his word to do so.

So they gave Kettle breathing-time to talk to Thrain.

A little after they spoke of the matter again to Kettle, but he said that he would repeat few of the words that had passed between them, "for it was pretty plain that Thrain thought I set too great store on being your brother-in-law."

Then they dropped talking about it, and thought they saw that things looked ugly, and so they asked their father for his counsel as to what was to be done, but they told him they would not let things rest as they then stood.

"Such things," said Njal, "are not so strange. It will be thought that they are slain without a cause, if they are slain now, and my counsel is, that as many men as may be should be brought to talk with them about these things, that thus as many as we can find may be ear-witnesses if they answer ill as to these things. Then Kari shall talk about them too, for he is just the man with the right turn of mind for this; then the dislike between you will grow and grow, for they will heap bad words on bad words when men bring the matter forward, for they are foolish men. It may also well be that it may be said that my sons are slow to take up a quarrel, but ye shall bear that for the sake of gaining time, for there are two sides to everything that is done, and ye can always pick a quarrel; but still ye shall let so much of your purpose out, as to say that if any wrong be put upon you that ye do mean something. But if ye had taken counsel from me at first, then these things should never have been spoken about at all, and then ye would have gotten no disgrace from them; but now ye have the greatest risk of it, and so it will go on ever growing and growing with your disgrace, that ye will never get rid of it until ye bring yourselves into a strait, and have to fight your way out with weapons; but in that there is a long and weary night in which ye will have to grope your way."

After that they ceased speaking about it; but the matter became the daily talk of many men.

One day it happened that those brothers spoke to Kari and bade him go to Gritwater. Kari said he thought he might go elsewhere on a better journey, but still he would go if that were Njal's counsel. So after that Kari fares to meet Thrain, and then they talk over the matter, and they did not each look at it in the same way.

Kari comes home, and Njal's sons ask how things had gone between Thrain and him. Kari said he would rather not repeat the words that had passed, "but," he went on, "it is to be looked for that the like words will be spoken when ye yourselves can hear them."

Thrain had fifteen house-earles trained to arms in his house, and eight of them rode with him whithersoever he went. Thrain was very fond of show and dress, and always rode in a blue cloak, and had on a gilded helm, and the spear—the Earl's gift—in his hand, and a fair shield, and a sword at his belt. Along with him always went Gunnar Lambi's son, and Lambi Sigurd's son, and

Grani, Gunnar of Lithend's son. But nearest of all to him went Killing-Hrapp. Lodinn was the name of his serving-man, he too went with Thrain when he journeyed; Tjorvi was the name of Loddin's brother, and he too was one of Thrain's band. The worst of all, in their words against Njal's sons, were Hrapp and Grani; and it was mostly their doing that no atonement was offered to them.

Njal's sons often spoke to Kari that he should ride with them; and it came to that at last, for he said it would be well that they heard Thrain's answer.

Then they busked them, four of Njal's sons, and Kari the fifth, and so they fare to Gritwater.

There was a wide porch in the homestead there, so that many men might stand in it side by side. There was a woman out of doors, and she saw their coming, and told Thrain of it; he bade them to go out into the porch, and take their arms, and they did so.

Thrain stood in mid-door, Killing-Hrapp and Grani Gunnar's son stood on either hand of him; then next stood Gunnar Lambi's son, then Lodinn and Tjorvi, then Lambi Sigurd's son; then each of the others took his place right and left; for the house-earles were all at home.

Skarphedinn and his men walk up from below, and he went first, then Kari, then Hauskuld, then Grim, then Helgi. But when they had come up to the door, then not a word of welcome passed the lips of those who stood before them.

"May we all be welcome here?" said Skarphedinn.

Hallgerda stood in the porch, and had been talking low to Hrapp, then she spoke out loud—

"None of those who are here will say that ye are welcome."

Then Skarphedinn sang a song.

Prop of sea-waves' fire, thy fretting
Cannot cast a weight on us,
Warriors wight; yes, wolf and eagle
Willingly I feed to-day;
Carline thrust into the ingle,
Or a tramping whore, art thou;
Lord of skates that skim the sea-belt,
Odin's mocking cup I mix.

"Thy words," said Skarphedinn, "will not be worth much, for thou art either a hag, only fit to sit in the ingle, or a harlot."

"These words of thine thou shalt pay for," she says, "ere thou farest home."

"Thee am I come to see, Thrain," said Helgi, "and to know if thou will make me any amends for those wrongs and hardships which befell me for thy sake in Norway."

"I never knew," said Thrain, "that ye two brothers were wont to measure your manhood by money; or, how long shall such a claim for amends stand over?"

"Many will say," says Helgi, "that thou oughtest to offer us atonement, since thy life was at stake."

Then Hrapp said, "'Twas just luck that swayed the balance, when he got stripes who ought to bear them; and she dragged you under disgrace and hardship, but us away from them."

"Little good luck was there in that," says Helgi, "to break faith with the Earl, and to take to thee instead."

"Thinkest thou not that thou hast some amends to seek from me?" says Hrapp, "I will atone thee in a way that, methinks, were fitting."

"The only dealings we shall have," says Helgi, "will be those which will not stand thee in good stead."

"Don't bandy words with Hrapp," said Skarphedinn, "but give him a red skin for a grey."

"Hold thy tongue, Skarphedinn," said Hrapp, "or I will not spare to bring my axe on thy head."

"'Twill be proved soon enough, I dare say," says Skarphedinn, "which of us is to scatter gravel over the other's head."

"Away with you home, ye 'Dung-beardlings!'" says Hallgerda, "and so we will call you always from this day forth; but your father we will call 'the Beardless Carle'."

They did not fare home before all who were there had made themselves guilty of uttering those words, save Thrain; he forbade men to utter them.

Then Njal's sons went away, and fared till they came home; then they told their father.

"Did ye call any man to witness of those words?" says Njal.

"We called none," says Skarphedinn; "we do not mean to follow that suit up except on the battlefield."

"No one will now think," says Bergthora, "that ye have the heart to lift your weapons."

"Spare thy tongue, mistress!" says Kari, "in egging on thy sons, for they will be quite eager enough."

After that they all talk long in secret, Njal and his sons, and Kari Solmund's son, their brother-in-law.

CHAPTER XCI. THRAIN SIGFUS' SON'S SLAYING.

Now there was great talk about this quarrel of theirs, and all seemed to know that it would not settle down peacefully.

Runolf, the son of Wolf Aupriest, east in the Dale, was a great friend of Thrain's, and had asked Thrain to come and see him, and it was settled that he should come east when about three weeks or a month were wanting to winter.

Thrain bade Hrapp, and Grani, and Gunnar Lambi's son, and Lambi Sigurd's son, and Lodinn, and Tjorvi, eight of them in all, to go on this journey with him. Hallgerda and Thorgerda were to go too. At the same time Thrain gave it out that he meant to stay in the Mark with his brother Kettle, and said how many nights he meant to be away from home.

They all of them had full arms. So they rode east across Markfleet, and found there some gangrel women, and they begged them to put them across the Fleet west on their horses, and they did so.

Then they rode into the Dale, and had a hearty welcome; there Kettle of the Mark met them, and there they sate two nights.

Both Runolf and Kettle besought Thrain that he would make up his quarrel with Njal's sons; but he said he would never pay any money, and answered crossly, for he said he thought himself quite a match for Njal's sons wherever they met.

"So it may be," says Runolf; "but so far as I can see, no man has been their match since Gunnar of Lithend died, and it is likelier that ye will both drag one another down to death."

Thrain said that was not to be dreaded.

Then Thrain fared up into the Mark, and was there two nights more; after that he rode down into the Dale, and was sent away from both houses with fitting gifts.

Now the Markfleet was then flowing between sheets of ice on both sides, and there were tongues of ice bridging it across every here and there.

Thrain said that he meant to ride home that evening, but Runolf said that he ought not to ride home; he said, too, that it would be more wary not to fare back as he had said he would before he left home.

"That is fear, and I will none of it," answers Thrain.

Now those gangrel women whom they had put across the Fleet came to Bergthorsknoll, and Bergthora asked whence they came, but they answered, "Away east under Eyjafell."

"Then, who put you across Markfleet?" said Bergthora.

"Those," said they, "who were the most boastful and bravest clad of men."

"Who?" asked Bergthora.

"Thrain Sigfus' son," said they, "and his company, but we thought it best to tell thee that they were so full-tongued and foul-tongued towards this house, against thy husband and his sons."

"Listeners do not often hear good of themselves," says Bergthora. After that they went their way, and Bergthora gave them gifts on their going, and asked them when Thrain might be coming home.

They said that he would be from home four or five nights.

After that Bergthora told her sons and her son-in-law Kari, and they talked long and low about the matter.

But that same morning, when Thrain and his men rode from the east, Njal woke up early and heard how Skarphedinn's axe came against the panel.

Then Njal rises up, and goes out, and sees that his sons are all there with their weapons, and Karl, his son-in-law too.

Skarphedinn was foremost. He was in a blue cape, and had a targe, and his axe aloft on his shoulder. Next to him went Helgi; he was in a red kirtle, had a helm on his head, and a red shield, on which a hart was marked. Next to him went Kari; he had on a silken jerkin, a gilded helm and shield, and on it was drawn a lion. They were all in bright holiday clothes.

Njal called out to Skarphedinn—

"Whither art thou going, kinsman?"

"On a sheep hunt," he said.

"So it was once before," said Njal, "but then ye hunted men."

Skarphedinn laughed at that, and said—

"Hear ye what the old man says? He is not without his doubts."

"When was it that thou spokest thus before?" asks Kari.

"When I slew Sigmund the white," says Skarphedinn, "Gunnar of Lithend's kinsman."

"For what?" asks Kari.

"He had slain Thord Freedmanson, my foster-father."

Njal went home, but they fared up into the Redslips, and bided there; thence they could see the others as soon as ever they rode from the east out of the dale.

There was sunshine that day and bright weather.

Now Thrain and his men ride down out of the Dale along the river bank.

Lambi Sigurd's son said—

"Shields gleam away yonder in the Redslips when the sun shines on them, and there must be some men lying in wait there."

"Then," says Thrain, "we will turn our way lower down the Fleet, and then they will come to meet us if they have any business with us."

So they turn down the Fleet. "Now they have caught sight of us," said Skarphedinn, "for lo! they turn their path elsewhither, and now we have no other choice than to run down and meet them."

"Many men," said Kari, "would rather not lie in wait if the balance of force were not more on their side than it is on ours; they are eight, but we are five."

Now they turn down along the Fleet, and see a tongue of ice bridging the stream lower down and mean to cross there.

Thrain and his men take their stand upon the ice away from the tongue, and Thrain said—

"What can these men want? They are five, and we are eight."

"I guess," said Lambi Sigurd's son, "that they would still run the risk though more men stood against them."

Thrain throws off his cloak, and takes off his helm.

Now it happened to Skarphedinn, as they ran down along the Fleet, that his shoe-string snapped asunder, and he stayed behind.

"Why so slow, Skarphedinn?" quoth Grim.

"I am tying my shoe," he says.

"Let us get on ahead," says Kari; "methinks he will not be slower than we."

So they turn off to the tongue, and run as fast as they can. Skarphedinn sprang up as soon as he was ready, and had lifted his axe, "the ogress of war," aloft, and runs right down to the Fleet. But the Fleet was so deep that there was no fording it for a long way up or down.

A great sheet of ice had been thrown up by the flood on the other side of the Fleet as smooth and slippery as glass, and there Thrain and his men stood in the midst of the sheet.

Skarphedinn takes a spring into the air, and leaps over the stream between the icebanks, and does not check his course, but rushes still onwards with a slide. The sheet of ice was very slippery, and so he went as fast as a bird flies. Thrain was just about to put his helm on his head; and now Skarphedinn bore down on them, and hews at Thrain with his axe, "the ogress of war," and smote him on the head, and clove him down to the teeth, so that his jaw-teeth fell out on the ice. This feat was done with such a quick sleight that no one could get a blow at him; he glided away from them at once at full speed. Tjorvi, indeed, threw his shield before him on the ice, but he leapt over it, and still kept his feet, and slid quite to the end of the sheet of ice.

There Kari and his brothers came to meet him.

"This was done like a man," says Kari.

"Your share is still left," says Skarphedinn, and sang a song.

To the strife of swords not slower,
After all, I came than you,
For with ready stroke the sturdy
Squanderer of wealth I felled;
But since Grim's and Helgi's sea-stag
Norway's Earl erst took and stripped,
Now 'tis time for sea-fire bearers
Such dishonour to avenge.

And this other song he sang—

Swiftly down I dashed my weapon,
Gashing giant, byrnie-breacher,
She, the noisy ogre's namesake,
Soon with flesh the ravens glutted;
Now your words to Hrapp remember,
On broad ice now rouse the storm,
With dull crash war's eager ogress
Battle's earliest note hath sung.

"That befits us well, and we wilt do it well," says Helgi. Then they turn up towards them. Both Grim and Helgi see where Hrapp is, and they turned on him at once. Hrapp hews at Grim there and then with his axe; Helgi sees this and cuts at Hrapp's arm, and cut it off, and down fell the axe.

"In this," says Hrapp, "thou hast done a most needful work, for this hand hath wrought harm and death to many a man."

"And so here an end shall be put to it," says Grim; and with that he ran him through with a spear, and then Hrapp fell down dead.

Tjorvi turns against Kari and hurls a spear at him. Kari leapt up in the air, and the spear flew below his feet. Then Kari rushes at him, and hews at him on the breast with his sword, and the blow passed at once into his chest, and he got his death there and then.

Then Skarphedinn seizes both Gunnar Lambi's son, and Grani Gunnar's son, and said—

"Here have I caught two whelps! but what shall we do with them?"

"It is in thy power," says Helgi, "to slay both or either of them, if you wish them dead."

"I cannot find it in my heart to do both—help Hogni and slay his brother," says Skarphedinn.

"Then the day will once come," says Helgi, "when thou wilt wish that thou hadst slain him, for never will he be true to thee, nor will any one of the others who are now here."

"I shall not fear them," answers Skarphedinn.

After that they gave peace to Grani Gunnar's son, and Gunnar Lambi's son, and Lambi Sigurd's son, and Lodinn.

After that they went down to the Fleet where Skarphedinn had leapt over it, and Kari and the others measured the length of the leap with their spear-shafts, and it was twelve ells (about eighteen feet, according to the old Norse measure).

Then they went homewards, and Njal asked what tidings.

They told him all just as it had happened, and Njal said—

"These are great tidings, and it is more likely that hence will come the death of one of my sons, if not more evil."

Gunnar Lambi's son bore the body of Thrain with him to Gritwater, and he was laid in a cairn there.

CHAPTER XCII. KETTLE TAKES HAUSKULD AS HIS FOSTER-SON.

Kettle of the Mark had to wife Thorgerda, Njal's daughter, but he was Thrain's brother, and he thought he was come into a strait, so he rode to Njal's house, and asked whether he were willing to atone in any way for Thrain's slaying?

"I will atone for it handsomely," answered Njal; "and my wish is that thou shouldst look after the matter with thy brothers who have to take the price of the atonement, that they may be ready to join in it."

Kettle said he would do so with all his heart, and Kettle rode home first; a little after, he summoned all his brothers to Lithend, and then he had a talk with them; and Hogni was on his side all through the talk; and so it came about that men were chosen to utter the award; and a meeting was agreed on, and the fair price of a man was awarded for Thrain's slaying, and they all had a share in the blood-money who had a lawful right to it. After that pledges of peace and good faith were agreed to, and they were settled in the most sure and binding way.

Njal paid down all the money out of hand well and bravely; and so things were quiet for a while.

One day Njal rode up into the Mark, and he and Kettle talked together the whole day, Njal rode home at even, and no man knew of what they had taken counsel.

A little after Kettle fares to Gritwater, and he said to Thorgerda—

"Long have I loved my brother Thrain much, and now I will show it, for I will ask Hauskuld Thrain's son to be my foster-child."

"Thou shalt have thy choice of this," she says; "and thou shalt give this lad all the help in thy power when he is grown up, and avenge him if he is slain with weapons, and bestow money on him for his wife's dower; and besides, thou shalt swear to do all this."

Now Hauskuld fares home with Kettle, and is with him some time.

CHAPTER XCIII. NJAL TAKES HAUSKULD TO FOSTER.

Once on a time Njal rides up into the Mark, and he had a hearty welcome. He was there that night, and in the evening Njal called out to the lad Hauskuld, and he went up to him at once.

Njal had a ring of gold on his hand, and showed it to the lad. He took hold of the gold, and looked at it, and put it on his finger.

"Wilt thou take the gold as a gift?" said Njal.

"That I will," said the lad.

"Knowest thou," says Njal, "what brought thy father to his death?"

"I know," answers the lad, "that Skarphedinn slew him; but we need not keep that in mind, when an atonement has been made for it, and a full price paid for him."

"Better answered than asked," said Njal; "and thou wilt live to be a good man and true," he adds.

"Methinks thy forecasting," says Hauskuld, "is worth having, for I know that thou art foresighted and unlying."

"Now I will offer to foster thee," said Njal, "if thou wilt take the offer."

He said he would be willing to take both that honour and any other good offer which he might make. So the end of the matter was, that Hauskuld fared home with Njal as his foster-son.

He suffered no harm to come nigh the lad, and loved him much. Njal's sons took him about with them, and did him honour in every way. And so things go on till Hauskuld is full grown. He was both tall and strong; the fairest of men to look on, and well-haired; blithe of speech, bountiful, well-behaved; as well trained to arms as the best; fairspoken to all men, and much beloved.

Njal's sons and Hauskuld were never apart, either in word or deed.

CHAPTER XCIV. OF FLOSI THORD'S SON.

There was a man named Flosi, he was the son of Thord Freys-priest. Flosi had to wife Steinvora, daughter of Hall of the Side. She was base born, and her mother's name was Solvora, daughter of Herjolf the white. Flosi dwelt at Swinefell, and was a mighty chief. He was tall of stature, and strong withal, the most forward and boldest of men. His brother's name was Starkad; he was not by the same mother as Flosi.

The other brothers of Flosi were Thorgeir and Stein, Kolbein and Egil. Hildigunna was the name of the daughter of Starkad Flosi's brother. She was a proud, high-spirited maiden, and one of the fairest of women. She was so skilful with her hands, that few women were equally skilful. She was the grimmest and hardest-hearted of all women; but still a woman of open hand and heart when any fitting call was made upon her.

CHAPTER XCV. OF HALL OF THE SIDE.

Hall was the name of a man who was called Hall of the Side. He was the son of Thorstein Baudvar's son. Hall had to wife Jor-eida, daughter of Thidrandi the wise. Thorstein was the name of

Hall's brother, and he was nick-named broadpaunch. His son was Kol, whom Kari slays in Wales. The sons of Hall of the Side were Thorstein and Egil, Thorwald and Ljot, and Thidrandi, whom, it is said, the goddesses slew.

There was a man named Thorir, whose surname was Holt-Thorir; his sons were these: Thorgeir Craggeir, and Thorleif crow, from whom the Wood-dwellers are come, and Thorgrim the big.

CHAPTER XCVI. OF THE CHANGE OF FAITH.

There had been a change of rulers in Norway, Earl Hacon was dead and gone, but in his stead was come Olaf Tryggvi's son. That was the end of Earl Hacon, that Kark, the thrall, cut his throat at Rimul in Gaulardale.

Along with that was heard that there had been a change of faith in Norway; they had cast off the old faith, but King Olaf had christened the western lands, Shetland, and the Orkneys, and the Faroe Isles.

Then many men spoke so that Njal heard it, that it was a strange and wicked thing to throw off the old faith.

Then Njal spoke and said—

"It seems to me as though this new faith must be much better, and he will be happy who follows this rather than the other; and if those men come out hither who preach this faith, then I will back them well."

He went often alone away from other men and muttered to himself.

That same harvest a ship came out into the firths east to Berufirth, at a spot called Gautawick. The captain's name was Thangbrand. He was a son of Willibald, a count of Saxony, Thangbrand was sent out hither by King Olaf Tryggvi's son, to preach the faith. Along with him came that man of Iceland whose name was Gudleif. Gudleif was a great man-slayer, and one of the strongest of men, and hardy and forward in everything.

Two brothers dwelt at Beruness; the name of the one was Thorleif, but the other was Kettle. They were sons of Holmstein, the son of Auzur of Broaddale. These brothers held a meeting, and forbade men to have any dealings with them. This Hall of the Side heard. He dwelt at Thvattwater in Alftafirth; he rode to the ship with twenty-nine men, and he fares at once to find Thangbrand, and spoke to him and asked him—

"Trade is rather dull, is it not?"

He answered that so it was.

"Now will I say my errand," says Hall; "it is, that I wish to ask you all to my house, and run the risk of my being able to get rid of your wares for you."

Thangbrand thanked him, and fared to Thvattwater that harvest.

It so happened one morning that Thangbrand was out early and made them pitch a tent on land, and sang mass in it, and took much pains with it, for it was a great high day.

Hall spoke to Thangbrand and asked, "In memory of whom keepest thou this day?"

"In memory of Michael the archangel," says Thangbrand.

"What follows that angel?" asks Hall.

"Much good," says Thangbrand. "He will weigh all the good that thou doest, and he is so merciful, that whenever any one pleases him, he makes his good deeds weigh more."

"I would like to have him for my friend," says Hall.

"That thou mayest well have," says Thangbrand, "only give thyself over to him by God's help this very day."

"I only make this condition," says Hall, "that thou givest thy word for him that he will then become my guardian angel."

"That I will promise," says Thangbrand.

Then Hall was baptised, and all his household.

CHAPTER XCVII. OF THANGBRAND'S JOURNEYS.

The spring after Thangbrand set out to preach Christianity, and Hall went with him. But when they came west across Lonsheath to Staffell, there they found a man dwelling named Thorkell. He

spoke most against the faith, and challenged Thangbrand to single combat. Then Thangbrand bore a rood-cross before his shield, and the end of their combat was that Thangbrand won the day and slew Thorkell.

Thence they fared to Hornfirth and turned in as guests at Bor-garhaven, west of Heinabergs sand. There Hildir the old dwelt, and then Hildir and all his household took upon them the new faith.

Thence they fared to Fellcombe, and went in as guests to Calf-fell. There dwelt Kol Thorstein's son, Hall's kinsman, and he took upon him the faith and all his house.

Thence they fared to Swinefell, and Flosi only took the sign of the cross, but gave his word to back them at the Thing.

Thence they fared west to Woodcombe, and went in as guests at Kirkby. There dwelt Surt Asbjorn's son, the son of Thorstein, the son of Kettle the foolish. These had all of them been Christians from father to son.

After that they fared out of Woodcombe on to Headbrink. By that time the story of their journey was spread far and wide. There was a man named Sorcerer-Hedinn who dwelt in Carlinedale. There heathen men made a bargain with him that he should put Thangbrand to death with all his company. He fared upon Arn-stacksheath, and there made a great sacrifice when Thangbrand was riding from the east. Then the earth burst asunder under his horse, but he sprang off his horse and saved himself on the brink of the gulf, but the earth swallowed up the horse and all his harness, and they never saw him more.

Then Thangbrand praised God.

CHAPTER XCVIII. OF THANGBRAND AND GUDLEIF.

Gudleif now searches for Sorcerer-Hedinn and finds him on the heath, and chases him down into Carlinedale, and got within spearshot of him, and shoots a spear at him and through him.

Thence they fared to Dyrholms and held a meeting there, and preached the faith there, and there Ingialld, the son of Thorsteinn Highbankaw, became a Christian.

Thence they fared to the Fleetlithe and preached the faith there. There Weatherlid the Skald, and Ari his son, spoke most against the faith, and for that they slew Weatherlid, and then this song was sung about it—

He who proved his blade on bucklers,
South went through the land to whet
Brand that oft hath felled his foeman,
'Gainst the forge which foams with song;
Mighty wielder of war's sickle
Made his sword's avenging edge
Hard on hero's helm-prop rattle,
Skull of Weatherlid the Skald.

Thence Thangbrand fared to Bergthorsknoll, and Njal took the faith and all his house, but Mord and Valgard went much against it, and thence they fared out across the rivers; so they went on into Hawkdale and there they baptised Hall, and he was then three winters old.

Thence Thangbrand fared to Grimsness, there Thorwald the scurvy gathered a band against him, and sent word to Wolf Uggi's son, that he must fare against Thangbrand and slay him, and made this song on him—

To the wolf in Woden's harness,
Uggi's worthy warlike son,
I, steel's swinger dearly loving,
This my simple bidding send;
That the wolf of Gods he chaseth,—
Man who snaps at chink of gold—
Wolf who base our Gods blasphemeth,
I the other wolf will crush.

Wolf sang another song in return—

Swarthy skarf from month that skimmeth
Of the man who speaks in song
Never will I catch, though surely
Wealthy warrior it hath sent;
Tender of the sea-horse snorting,
E'en though ill deeds are on foot,
Still to risk mine eyes are open;
Harmful 'tis to snap at flies.

"And," says he, "I don't mean to be made a catspaw by him, but let him take heed lest his tongue twists a noose for his own neck."

And after that the messenger fared back to Thorwald the scurvy and told him Wolf's words. Thorwald had many men about him, and gave it out that he would lie in wait for them on Blue-woodheath.

Now those two, Thangbrand and Gudleif, ride out of Hawkdale, and there they came upon a man who rode to meet them. That man asked for Gudleif, and when he found him he said—

"Thou shalt gain by being the brother of Thorgil of Reykiahole, for I will let thee know that they have set many ambushes, and this too, that Thorwald the scurvy is now with his band At Hestbeck on Grimsness."

"We shall not the less for all that ride to meet him," says Gudleif, and then they turned down to Hestbeck. Thorwald was then come across the brook, and Gudleif said to Thangbrand—

"Here is now Thorwald; let us rush on him now." Thangbrand shot a spear through Thorwald, but Gudleif smote him on the shoulder and hewed his arm off, and that was his death.

After that they ride up to the Thing, and it was a near thing that the kinsmen of Thorwald had fallen on Thangbrand, but Njal and the eastfirthers stood by Thangbrand.

Then Hjalalti Skeggi's son sang this rhyme at the Hill of Laws—

Ever will I Gods blaspheme
Freyja methinks a dog does seem,
Freyja a dog? Aye! let them be
Both dogs together Odin and she.

Hjalalti fared abroad that summer and Gizur the white with him, but Thangbrand's ship was wrecked away east at Bulandsness, and the ship's name was "Bison."

Thangbrand and his messmate fared right through the west country, and Steinvora, the mother of Ref the Skald, came against him; she preached the heathen faith to Thangbrand and made him a long speech. Thangbrand held his peace while she spoke, but made a long speech after her, and turned all that she had said the wrong way against her.

"Hast thou heard," she said, "how Thor challenged Christ to single combat, and how he did not dare to fight with Thor?"

"I have heard tell," says Thangbrand, "that Thor was naught but dust and ashes, if God had not willed that he should live."

"Knowest thou," she says, "who it was that shattered thy ship?"

"What hast thou to say about that?" he asks.

"That I will tell thee," she says.

He that giant's offspring slayeth
Broke the new-field's bison stout,
Thus the Gods, bell's warder grieving,
Crushed the falcon of the strand;
To the courser of the causeway
Little good was Christ I ween,
When Thor shattered ships to pieces
Gylfi's hart no God could help.

And again she sang another song—

Thangbrand's vessel from her moorings,
Sea-king's steed, Thor wrathful tore,
Shook and shattered all her timbers,
Hurled her broadside on the beach;
Ne'er again shall Viking's snow-shoe,
On the briny billows glide,
For a storm by Thor awakened,
Dashed the bark to splinters small.

After that Thangbrand and Steinvora parted, and they fared west to Bardastrand.

CHAPTER XCIX. OF GEST ODDLEIF'S SON.

Gest Oddleif's son dwelt at Hagi on Bardastrand, He was one of the wisest of men, so that he foresaw the fates and fortunes of men. He made a feast for Thangbrand and his men. They fared to Hagi with sixty men. Then it was said that there were two hundred heathen men to meet them, and that a Baresark was looked for to come thither, whose name was Otrygg, and all were afraid of him. Of him such great things as these were said, that he feared neither fire nor sword, and the heathen men were sore afraid at

his coming. Then Thangbrand asked if men were willing to take the faith, but all the heathen men spoke against it.

"Well," says Thangbrand, "I will give you the means whereby ye shall prove whether my faith is better. We will hallow two fires. The heathen men shall hallow one and I the other, but a third shall he unhallowed; and if the Baresark is afraid of the one that I hallow, but treads both the others, then ye shall take the faith."

"That is well-spoken," says Gest, "and I will agree to this for myself and my household."

And when Gest had so spoken, then many more agreed to it.

Then it was said that the Baresark was coming up to the home-stand, and then the fires were made and burned strong. Then men took their arms and sprang up on the benches, and so waited.

The Baresark rushed in with his weapons. He comes into the room, and treads at once the fire which the heathen men had hallowed, and so comes to the fire that Thangbrand had hallowed, and dares not to tread it, but said that he was on fire all over. He hews with his sword at the bench, but strikes a cross-beam as he brandished the weapon aloft. Thangbrand smote the arm of the Baresark with his crucifix, and so mighty a token followed that the sword fell from the Baresark's hand.

Then Thangbrand thrusts a sword into his breast, and Gudleif smote him on the arm and hewed it off. Then many went up and slew the Baresark.

After that Thangbrand asked if they would take the faith now?

Gest said he had only spoken what he meant to keep to.

Then Thangbrand baptised Gest and all his house and many others. Then Thangbrand took counsel with Gest whether he should go any further west among the firths, but Gest set his face against that, and said they were a hard race of men there, and ill to deal with, "but if it be foredoomed that this faith shall make its way, then it will be taken as law at the Althing, and then all the chiefs out of the districts will be there."

"I did all that I could at the Thing," says Thangbrand, "and it was very uphill work."

"Still thou hast done most of the work," says Gest, "though it may be fated that others shall make Christianity law; but it is here as the saying runs, 'No tree falls at the first stroke'."

After that Gest gave Thangbrand good gifts, and he fared back south. Thangbrand fared to the Southlander's Quarter, and so to the Eastfirths. He turned in as a guest at Bergthorsknoll, and Njal gave him good gifts. Thence he rode east to Alftafirth to meet Hall of the Side. He caused his ship to be mended, and heathen man called it "Iron-basket." On board that ship Thangbrand fared abroad, and Gudleif with him.

CHAPTER C. OF GIZUR THE WHITE AND HJALLTI.

That same summer Hjalalti Skeggi's son was outlawed at the Thing for blasphemy against the Gods.

Thangbrand told King Olaf of all the mischief that the Icelanders had done to him, and said that they were such sorcerers there that the earth burst asunder under his horse and swallowed up the horse.

Then King Olaf was so wroth that he made them seize all the men from Iceland and set them in dungeons, and meant to slay them.

Then they, Gizur the white and Hjalalti, came up and offered to lay themselves in pledge for those men, and fare out to Iceland and preach the faith. The king took this well, and they got them all set free again.

Then Gizur and Hjalalti busked their ship for Iceland, and were soon "boun." They made the land at Eyrar when ten weeks of summer had passed; they got them horses at once, but left other men to strip their ship. Then they ride with thirty men to the Thing, and sent word to the Christian men that they must be ready to stand by them.

Hjalalti stayed behind at Reydarmull, for he had heard that he had been made an outlaw for blasphemy, but when they came to the "Boiling Kettle" down below the brink of the Rift, there came Hjalalti after them, and said he would not let the heathen men see that he was afraid of them.

Then many Christian men rode to meet them, and they ride in battle array to the Thing. The heathen men had drawn up their men in array to meet them, and it was a near thing that the whole body of the Thing had come to blows, but still it did not go so far.

CHAPTER CI. OF THORGEIR OF LIGHTWATER.

There was a man named Thorgeir who dwelt at Lightwater; he was the son of Tjorfi, the son of Thorkel the long, the son of Kettle Longneck. His mother's name was Thoruna, and she was the daughter of Thorstein, the son of Sigmund, the son of Bard of the Nip. Gudrida was the name of his wife; she was a daughter of Thorkel the black of Hleidrar garth. His brother was Worm wallet-back, the father of Hlenni the old of Saurby.

The Christian men set up their booths, and Gizur the white and Hjalalti were in the booths of the men from Mossfell. The day after both sides went to the Hill of Laws, and each, the Christian men as well as the heathen, took witness, and declared themselves out of the other's laws, and then there was such an uproar on the Hill of Laws that no man could hear the other's voice.

After that men went away, and all thought things looked like the greatest entanglement. The Christian men chose as their Speaker Hall of the Side, but Hall went to Thorgeir, the priest of Lightwater, who was the old Speaker of the law, and gave him three marks of silver to utter what the law should be, but still that was most hazardous counsel, since he was a heathen.

Thorgeir lay all that day on the ground, and spread a cloak over his head, so that no man spoke with him; but the day after men went to the Hill of Laws, and then Thorgeir bade them be silent and listen, and spoke thus—

"It seems to me as though our matters were come to a dead lock, if we are not all to have one and the same law; for if there be a sundering of the laws, then there will be a sundering of the peace, and we shall never be able to live in the land. Now, I will ask both Christian men and heathen whether they will hold to those laws which I utter."

They all say they would.

He said he wished to take an oath of them, and pledges that they would hold to them, and they all said "yea" to that, and so he took pledges from them.

"This is the beginning of our laws," he said, "that all men shall be Christian here in the land, and believe in one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but leave off all idol-worship, not expose children to perish, and not eat horseflesh. It shall be outlawry if such things are proved openly against any man; but if these things are done by stealth, then it shall be blameless."

But all this heathendom was all done away with within a few years' space, so that those things were not allowed to be done either by stealth or openly.

Thorgeir then uttered the law as to keeping the Lord's day and fast days, Yuletide and Easter, and all the greatest highdays and holidays.

The heathen men thought they had been greatly cheated; but still the true faith was brought into the law, and so all men became Christian here in the land.

After that men fare home from the Thing.

CHAPTER CII. THE WEDDING OF HAUSKULD, THE PRIEST OF WHITENESS.

Now we must take up the story, and say that Njal spoke thus to Hauskuld, his foster-son, and said—

"I would seek thee a match."

Hauskuld bade him settle the matter as he pleased, and asked whether he was most likely to turn his eyes.

"There is a woman called Hildigunna," answers Njal, "and she is the daughter of Starkad, the son of Thord Freyspriest. She is the best match I know of."

"See thou to it, foster-father," said Hauskuld; "that shall be my choice which thou chooseth."

"Then we will look thitherward," says Njal.

A little while after, Njal called on men to go along with him. Then the sons of Sigfus, and Njal's sons, and Kari Solmund's son, all of them fared with him and they rode east to Swinefell.

There they got a hearty welcome.

The day after, Njal and Flosi went to talk alone, and the speech of Njal ended thus, that he said—

"This is my errand here, that we have set out on a wooing-journey, to ask for thy kinswoman Hildigunna."

"At whose hand?" says Flosi.

"At the hand of Hauskuld my foster-son," says Njal.

"Such things are well meant," says Flosi, "but still ye run each of you great risk, the one from the other; but what hast thou to say of Hauskuld?"

"Good I am able to say of him," says Njal; "and besides, I will lay down as much money as will seem fitting to thy niece and thyself, if thou wilt think of making this match."

"We will call her hither," says Flosi, "and know how she looks on the man."

Then Hildigunna was called, and she came thither.

Flosi told her of the wooing, but she said she was a proud-hearted woman.

"And I know not how things will turn out between me and men of like spirit; but this, too, is not the least of my dislike, that this man has no priesthood or leadership over men, but thou hast always said that thou wouldst not wed me to a man who had not the priesthood."

"This is quite enough," says Flosi, "if thou wilt not be wedded to Hauskuld, to make me take no more pains about the match."

"Nay!" she says, "I do not say that I will not be wedded to Hauskuld if they can get him a priesthood or a leadership over men; but otherwise I will have nothing to say to the match."

"Then," said Njal, "I will beg thee to let this match stand over for three winters, that I may see what I can do."

Flosi said that so it should be.

"I will only bargain for this one thing," says Hildigunna, "if this match comes to pass, that we shall stay here away east."

Njal said he would rather leave that to Hauskuld, but Hauskuld said that he put faith in many men, but in none so much as his foster-father.

Now they ride from the east.

Njal sought to get a priesthood and leadership for Hauskuld, but no one was willing to sell his priesthood, and now the summer passes away till the Althing.

There were great quarrels at the Thing that summer, and many a man then did as was their wont, in faring to see Njal; but he gave such counsel in men's lawsuits as was not thought at all likely, so that both the pleadings and the defence came to naught, and out of that great strife arose, when the lawsuits could not be brought to an end, and men rode home from the Thing unatoned.

Now things go on till another Thing comes. Njal rode to the Thing, and at first all is quiet until Njal says that it is high time for men to give notice of their suits.

Then many said that they thought that came to little, when no man could get his suit settled, even though the witnesses were summoned to the Althing, "and so," say they, "we would rather seek our rights with point and edge."

"So it must not be," says Njal, "for it will never do to have no law in the land. But yet ye have much to say on your side in this matter, and it behoves us who know the law, and who are bound to guide the law, to set men at one again, and to ensue peace. 'Twere good counsel, then, methinks, that we call together all the chiefs and talk the matter over."

Then they go to the Court of Laws, and Njal spoke and said—

"Thee, Skapti Thorod's son and you other chiefs, I call on, and say, that methinks our lawsuits have come into a deadlock, if we have to follow up our suits in the Quarter Courts, and they get so entangled that they can neither be pleaded nor ended. Methinks, it were wiser if we had a Fifth Court, and there pleaded those suits which cannot be brought to an end in the Quarter Courts."

"How," said Skapti, "wilt thou name a Fifth Court, when the Quarter Court is named for the old priestships, three twelves in each quarter?"

"I can see help for that," says Njal, "by setting up new priest-hoods, and filling them with the men who are best fitted in each Quarter, and then let those men who are willing to agree to it, declare themselves ready to join the new priest's Thing."

"Well," says Skapti, "we will take this choice; but what weighty suits shall come before the court?"

"These matters shall come before it," says Njal—"all matters of contempt of the Thing, such as if men bear false witness, or utter a false finding; hither, too, shall come all those suits in which the Judges are divided in opinion in the Quarter Court; then they shall be summoned to the Fifth Court; so, too, if men offer bribes, or take them, for their help in suits. In this court all the oaths shall be of the strongest kind, and two men shall follow every oath, who shall support on their words of honour what the others swear. So it shall be also, if the pleadings on one side are right in form, and the other wrong, that the judgment shall be given for those that are right in form. Every suit in this court shall be pleaded just as is now done in the Quarter Court, save and except that when four twelves are named in the Fifth Court, then the plaintiff shall name and set aside six men out of the court, and the defendant other six; but if he will not set them aside, then the plaintiff shall name them and set them aside as he has done with his own six; but if the plaintiff does not set them aside, then the suit comes to naught, for three twelves shall utter judgment on all suits. We shall also have this arrangement in the Court of Laws, that those only shall have the right to make or change laws who sit on the middle bench, and to this bench those only shall be chosen who are wisest and best. There, too, shall the Fifth Court sit; but if those who sit in the Court of Laws are not agreed as to what they shall allow or bring in as law, then they shall clear the court for a division, and the majority shall bind the rest; but if any man who has a seat in the Court be outside the Court of Laws and cannot get inside it, or thinks himself overborne in the suit, then he shall forbid them by a protest, so that they can hear it in the Court, and then he has made all their grants and all their decisions void and of none effect, and stopped them by his protest."

After that, Skapti Thorod's son brought the Fifth Court into the law, and all that was spoken of before. Then men went to the Hill of Laws, and men set up new priesthoods: in the Northlanders' Quarter were these new priesthoods. The priesthood of the Melmen in Midfirth, and the Laufesingers' priesthood in the Eyjafirth.

Then Njal begged for a hearing, and spoke thus—

"It is known to many men what passed between my sons and the men of Gritwater when they slew Thrain Sigfus' son. But for all that we settled the matter; and now I have taken Hauskuld into my house, and planned a marriage for him if he can get a priest-hood anywhere; but no man will sell his priest-hood, and so I will beg you to give me leave to set up a new priest-hood at Whiteness for Hauskuld."

He got this leave from all, and after that he set up the new priest-hood for Hauskuld; and he was afterwards called Hauskuld, the Priest of Whiteness.

After that, men ride home from the Thing, and Njal stayed but a short time at home ere he rides east to Swinefell, and his sons with him, and again stirs in the matter of the marriage with Flosi; but Flosi said he was ready to keep faith with them in everything.

Then Hildigunna was betrothed to Hauskuld, and the day for the wedding feast was fixed, and so the matter ended. They then ride home, but they rode again shortly to the bridal, and Flosi paid down all her goods and money after the wedding, and all went off well.

They fared home to Berghthorsknoll, and were there the next year, and all went well between Hildigunna and Bergthora. But the next spring Njal bought land in Ossaby, and hands it over to Hauskuld, and thither he fares to his own abode. Njal got him all his household, and there was such love between them all, that none of them thought anything that he said or did any worth unless the others had a share in it.

Hauskuld dwelt long at Ossaby, and each backed the other's honour, and Njal's sons were always in Hauskuld's company. Their friendship was so warm, that each house bade the other to a feast every harvest, and gave each other great gifts; and so it goes on for a long while.

CHAPTER CIII. THE SLAYING OF HAUSKULD NJAL'S SON.

There was a man named Lyting; he dwelt at Samstede, and he had to wife a woman named Steinvara; she was a daughter of Sigfus, and Thrain's sister. Lyting was tall of growth and a strong man, wealthy in goods and ill to deal with.

It happened once that Lyting had a feast in his house at Samstede, and he had bidden thither Hauskuld and the sons of Sigfus, and they all came. There, too, was Grani Gunnar's son, and Gunnar Lambi's son, and Lambi Sigurd's son.

Hauskuld Njal's son and his mother had a farm at Holt, and he was always riding to his farm from Berghthorsknoll, and his path lay by the homestead at Samstede. Hauskuld had a son called Amund; he had been born blind, but for all that he was tall and strong. Lyting had two brothers—the one's name was Hallstein, and the other's Hallgrim. They were the most unruly of men, and they were ever with their brother, for other men could not bear their temper.

Lyting was out of doors most of that day, but every now and then he went inside his house. At last he had gone to his seat, when in came a woman who had been out of doors, and she said—

"You were too far off to see outside how that proud fellow rode by the farmyard!"

"What proud fellow was that," says Lyting, "of whom thou speakest?"

"Hauskuld Njal's son rode here by the yard," she says.

"He rides often here by the farmyard," said Lyting, "and I can't say that it does not try my temper; and now I will make thee an offer, Hauskuld [Sigfus' son], to go along with thee if thou wilt avenge thy father and slay Hauskuld Njal's son."

"That I will not do," says Hauskuld, "for then I should repay Njal, my foster father, evil for good, and mayst thou and thy feasts never thrive henceforth."

With that he sprang up away from the board, and made them catch his horses, and rode home.

Then Lyting said to Grani Gunnar's son—

"Thou wert by when Thrain was slain, and that will still be in thy mind; and thou, too, Gunnar Lambi's son, and thou, Lambi Sigurd's son. Now, my will is that we ride to meet him this evening, and slay him."

"No," says Grani, "I will not fall on Njal's son, and so break the atonement which good men and true have made."

With like words spoke each man of them, and so, too, spoke all the sons of Sigfus; and they took that counsel to ride away.

Then Lyting said, when they had gone away—

"All men know that I have taken no atonement for my brother-in-law Thrain, and I shall never be content that no vengeance—man for man—shall be taken for him."

After that he called on his two brothers to go with him, and three house-carles as well. They went on the way to meet Hauskuld [Njal's son] as he came back, and lay in wait for him north of the farmyard in a pit; and there they bided till it was about mid-even [six o'clock P.M.]. Then Hauskuld rode up to them. They jump up all of them with their arms, and fall on him. Hauskuld guarded himself well, so that for a long while they could not get the better of him; but the end of it was at last that he wounded Lyting on the arm, and slew two of his serving-men, and then fell himself. They gave Hauskuld sixteen wounds, but they hewed not off the head from his body. They fared away into the wood east of Rangriver, and hid themselves there.

That same evening, Rodny's shepherd found Hauskuld dead, and went home and told Rodny of her son's slaying.

"Was he surely dead?" she asks; "was his head off?"

"It was not," he says.

"I shall know if I see," she says; "so take thou my horse and driving gear."

He did so, and got all things ready, and then they went thither where Hauskuld lay.

She looked at the wounds, and said—

"'Tis even as I thought, that he could not be quite dead, and Njal no doubt can cure greater wounds."

After that they took the body and laid it on the sledge and drove to Bergthorskknoll, and drew it into the sheepcote, and made him sit upright against the wall.

Then they went both of them and knocked at the door, and a house-carle went to the door. She steals in by him at once, and goes till she comes to Njal's bed.

She asked whether Njal were awake? He said he had slept up to that time, but was then awake.

"But why art thou come hither so early?"

"Rise thou up," said Rodny, "from thy bed by my rival's side, and come out, and see thou, and thy sons, to see thy son Hauskuld."

They rose and went out.

"Let us take our weapons," said Skarphedinn, "and have them with us."

Njal said naught at that, and they ran in and came out again armed.

She goes first till they come to the sheepcote; she goes in and bade them follow her. Then she lit a torch and held it up and said—

"Here, Njal, is thy son Hauskuld, and he hath gotten many wounds upon him, and now he will need leechcraft."

"I see death marks on him," said Njal, "but no signs of life; but why hast thou not closed his eyes and nostrils? see, his nostrils are still open!"

"That duty I meant for Skarphedinn," she says.

Then Skarphedinn went to close his eyes and nostrils, and said to his father—

"Who, sayest thou, hath slain him?"

"Lyting of Samstede and his brothers must have slain him," says Njal.

Then Rodny said, "Into thy hands, Skarphedinn, I leave it to take vengeance for thy brother, and I ween that thou wilt take it well, though he be not lawfully begotten, and that thou wilt not be slow to take it."

"Wonderfully do ye men behave," said Bergthora, "when ye slay men for small cause, but talk and tarry over such wrongs as this until no vengeance at all is taken; and now tidings of this will soon come to Hauskuld, the Priest of Whiteness, and he will be offering you atonement, and you will grant him that, but now is the time to act about it, if ye seek for vengeance."

"Our mother eggs us on now with a just goading," said Skarphedinn, and sang a song.

Well we know the warrior's temper,
One and all, well, father thine,
But atonement to the mother,
Snake-land's stem and thee were base;
He that hoardeth ocean's fire
Hearing this will leave his home;
Wound of weapon us hath smitten,
Worse the lot of those that wait!

After that they all ran out of the sheepcote, but Rodny went indoors with Njal, and was there the rest of the night.

CHAPTER CIV. THE SLAYING OF LYTING'S BROTHERS.

Now we must speak of Skarphedinn and his brothers, how they bend their course up to Rangriver. Then Skarphedinn said—

"Stand we here and listen, and let us go stilly, for I hear the voices of men up along the river's bank. But will ye, Helgi and Grim, deal with Lyting single-handed, or with both his brothers?"

They said they would sooner deal with Lyting alone.

"Still," says Skarphedinn, "there is more game in him, and methinks it were ill if he gets away, but I trust myself best for not letting him escape."

"We will take such steps," says Helgi, "if we get a chance at him, that he shall not slip through our fingers."

Then they went thitherward, Where they heard the voices of men, and see where Lyting and his brothers are by a stream.

Skarphedinn leaps over the stream at once, and alights on the sandy brink on the other side. There upon it stands Hallgrim and his brother. Skarphedinn smites at Hallgrim's thigh, so that he cut the leg clean off, but he grasps Hallstein with his left hand. Lyting thrust at Skarphedinn, but Helgi came up then and threw his

shield before the spear, and caught the blow on it. Lyting took up a stone and hurled it at Skarphedinn, and he lost his hold on Hallstein. Hallstein sprang up the sandy bank, but could get up it in no other way than by crawling on his hands and knees. Skarphedinn made a side blow at him with his axe, "the ogress of war," and hews asunder his backbone. Now Lyting turns and flies, but Helgi and Grim both went after him, and each gave him a wound, but still Lyting got across the river away from them, and so to the horses, and gallops till he comes to Ossaby.

Hauskuld was at home, and meets him at once. Lyting told him of these deeds.

"Such things were to be looked for by thee," says Hauskuld. "Thou hast behaved like a madman, and here the truth of the old saw will be proved: 'but a short while is hand fain of blow'. Methinks what thou hast got to look to now is whether thou wilt be able to save thy life or not."

"Sure enough," says Lyting, "I had hard work to get away, but still I wish now that thou wouldst get me atoned with Njal and his sons, so that I might keep my farm."

"So it shall be," says Hauskuld.

After that Hauskuld made them saddle his horse, and rode to Bergthorskknoll with five men. Njal's sons were then come home and had laid them down to sleep.

Hauskuld went at once to see Njal, and they began to talk.

"Hither am I come," said Hauskuld to Njal, "to beg a boon on behalf of Lyting, my uncle. He has done great wickedness against you and yours, broken his atonement and slain thy son."

"Lyting will perhaps think," said Njal, "that he has already paid a heavy fine in the loss of his brothers, but if I grant him any terms, I shall let him reap the good of my love for thee, and I will tell thee before I utter the award of atonement, that Lyting's brothers shall fall as outlaws. Nor shall Lyting have any atonement for his wounds, but on the other hand, he shall pay the full blood-fine for Hauskuld."

"My wish," said Hauskuld, "is, that thou shouldest make thine own terms."

"Well," says Njal, "then I will utter the award at once if thou wilt."

"Wilt thou," says Hauskuld, "that thy sons should be by?"

"Then we should be no nearer an atonement than we were before," says Njal, "but they will keep to the atonement which I utter."

Then Hauskuld said, "Let us close the matter then, and handsel him peace on behalf of thy sons."

"So it shall be," says Njal. "My will then is that he pays two hundred in silver for the slaying of Hauskuld, but he may still dwell at Samstede; and yet I think it were wiser if he sold his land and changed his abode; but not for this quarrel; neither I nor my sons will break our pledges of peace to him: but methinks it may be that some one may rise up in this country against whom he may have to be on his guard. Yet, lest it should seem that I make a man an outcast from his native place, I allow him to be here in this neighbourhood, but in that case he alone is answerable for what may happen."

After that Hauskuld fared home, and Njal's sons woke up as he went, and asked their father who had come, but he told them that his foster-son Hauskuld had been there.

"He must have come to ask a boon for Lyting then," said Skarphedinn.

"So it was," says Njal

"Ill was it then," says Grim.

"Hauskuld could not have thrown his shield before him," says Njal, "if thou hadst slain him, as it was meant thou shouldst."

"Let us throw no blame on our father," says Skarphedinn.

Now it is to be said that this atonement was kept between them afterwards.

CHAPTER CV. OF AMUND THE BLIND.

That event happened three winters after at the Thingskala-Thing that Amund the blind was at the Thing; he was the son of Hauskuld Njal's son. He made men lead him about among the booths, and so he came to the booth inside which was Lyting of

Samstede. He made them lead him into the booth till he came before Lyting.

"Is Lyting of Samstede here?" he asked.

"What dost thou want?" says Lyting.

"I want to know," says Amund, "what atonement thou wilt pay me for my father, I am base-born, and I have touched no fine."

"I have atoned for the slaying of thy father," says Lyting, "with a full price, and thy father's father and thy father's brothers took the money; but my brothers fell without a price as outlaws; and so it was that I had both done an ill-deed, and paid dear for it."

"I ask not," says Amund, "as to thy having paid an atonement to them. I know that ye two are now friends, but I ask this, what atonement thou wilt pay to me?"

"None at all," says Lyting.

"I cannot see," says Amund, "how thou canst have right before God, when thou hast stricken me so near the heart; but all I can say is, that if I were blessed with the sight of both my eyes, I would have either a money fine for my father, or revenge man for man; and so may God judge between us."

After that he went out; but when he came to the door of the booth, he turned short round towards the inside. Then his eyes were opened, and he said—

"Praised be the Lord! now I see what His will is."

With that he ran straight into the booth until he comes before Lyting, and smites him with an axe on the head, so that it sunk in up to the hammer, and gives the axe a pull towards him.

Lyting fell forwards and was dead at once.

Amund goes out to the door of the booth, and when he got to the very same spot on which he had stood when his eyes were opened, lo! they were shut again, and he was blind all his life after.

Then he made them lead him to Njal and his sons, and he told them of Lyting's slaying.

"Thou mayest not be blamed for this," says Njal, "for such things are settled by a higher power; but it is worth while to take warning from such events, lest we cut any short who have such near claims as Amund had."

After that Njal offered an atonement to Lyting's kinsmen. Hauskuld the Priest of Whiteness had a share in bringing Lyting's kinsmen to take the fine, and then the matter was put to an award, and half the fines fell away for the sake of the claim which he seemed to have on Lyting.

After that men came forward with pledges of peace and good faith, and Lyting's kinsmen granted pledges to Amund. Men rode home from the Thing; and now all is quiet for a long while.

CHAPTER CVI. OF VALGARD THE GUILFUL.

Valgard the guileful came back to Iceland that summer; he was then still heathen. He fared to Hof to his son Mord's house, and was there the winter over. He said to Mord—

"Here I have ridden far and wide all over the neighbourhood, and methinks I do not know it for the same. I came to Whiteness, and there I saw many tofts of booths and much ground levelled for building, I came to Thingskala-Thing, and there I saw all our booths broken down. What is the meaning of such strange things?"

"New priesthoods," answers Mord, "have been set up here, and a law for a Fifth Court, and men have declared themselves out of my Thing, and have gone over to Hauskuld's Thing."

"Ill hast thou repaid me," said Valgard, "for giving up to thee my priesthood, when thou hast handled it so little like a man, and now my wish is that thou shouldst pay them off by something that will drag them all down to death; and that thou canst do by setting them by the ears by tale-bearing, so that Njal's sons may slay Hauskuld; but there are many who will have the blood-feud after him, and so Njal's sons will be slain in that quarrel."

"I shall never be able to get that done," says Mord.

"I will give thee a plan," says Valgard; "thou shalt ask Njal's sons to thy house, and send them away with gifts, but thou shalt keep thy tale-bearing in the back ground until great friendship has sprung up between you, and they trust thee no worse than their

own selves. So wilt thou be able to avenge thyself on Skarphedinn for that he took thy money from thee after Gunnar's death; and in this wise, further on, thou wilt be able to seize the leadership when they are all dead and gone."

This plan they settled between them should be brought to pass; and Mord said—

"I would, father, that thou wouldst take on thee the new faith. Thou art an old man."

"I will not do that," says Valgard. "I would rather that thou shouldst cast off the faith, and see what follows then."

Mord said he would not do that. Valgard broke crosses before Mord's face, and all holy tokens. A little after Valgard took a sickness and breathed his last, and he was laid in a cairn by Hof.

CHAPTER CVII. OF MORD AND NJAL'S SONS.

Some while after Mord rode to Bergthorsknoll and saw Skarphedinn there; he fell into very fair words with them, and so he talked the whole day, and said he wished to be good friends with them, and to see much of them.

Skarphedinn took it all well, but said he had never sought for anything of the kind before. So it came about that he got himself into such great friendship with them, that neither side thought they had taken any good counsel unless the other had a share in it.

Njal always disliked his coming thither, and it often happened that he was angry with him.

It happened one day that Mord came to Bergthorsknoll, and Mord said to Njal's sons—

"I have made up my mind to give a feast yonder, and I mean to drink in my heirship after my father, but to that feast I wish to bid you, Njal's sons, and Kari; and at the same time I give you my word that ye shall not fare away giftless."

They promised to go, and now he fares home and makes ready the feast. He bade to it many householders, and that feast was very crowded.

Thither came Njal's sons and Kari. Mord gave Skarphedinn a brooch of gold, and a silver belt to Kari, and good gifts to Grim and Helgi.

They come home and boast of these gifts, and show them to Njal. He said they would be bought full dear, "and take heed that ye do not repay the giver in the coin which he no doubt wishes to get."

CHAPTER CVIII. OF THE SLANDER OF MORD VALGARD'S SON.

A little after Njal's sons and Hauskuld were to have their yearly feasts, and they were the first to bid Hauskuld to come to them.

Skarphedinn had a brown horse four winters old, both tall and sightly. He was a stallion, and had never yet been matched in fight. That horse Skarphedinn gave to Hauskuld, and along with him two mares. They all gave Hauskuld gifts, and assured him of their friendship.

After that Hauskuld bade them to his house at Ossaby, and had many guests to meet them, and a great crowd.

It happened that he had just then taken down his hall, but he had built three out-houses, and there the beds were made.

So all that were bidden came, and the feast went off very well. But when men were to go home Hauskuld picked out good gifts for them, and went a part of the way with Njal's sons.

The sons of Sigfus followed him and all the crowd, and both sides said that nothing should ever come between them to spoil their friendship.

A little while after Mord came to Ossaby and called Hauskuld out to talk with him, and they went aside and spoke.

"What a difference in manliness there is," said Mord, "between thee and Njal's sons! Thou gavest them good gifts, but they gave thee gifts with great mockery."

"How makest thou that out?" says Hauskuld.

"They gave thee a horse which they called a 'dark horse,' and that they did out of mockery at thee, because they thought thee

too untried, I can tell thee also that they envy thee the priesthood, Skarphedinn took it up as his own at the Thing when thou camest not to the Thing at the summoning of the Fifth Court, and Skarphedinn never means to let it go."

"That is not true," says Hauskuld, "for I got it back at the Folk-mote last harvest."

"Then that was Njal's doing," says Mord. "They broke, too, the atonement about Lyting."

"I do not mean to lay that at their door," says Hauskuld.

"Well," says Mord, "thou canst not deny that when ye two, Skarphedinn and thou, were going east towards Markfleet, an axe fell out from under his belt, and he meant to have slain thee then and there."

"It was his woodman's axe," says Hauskuld, "and I saw how he put it under his belt; and now, Mord, I will just tell thee this right out, that thou canst never say so much ill of Njal's sons as to make me believe it; but though there were aught in it, and it were true as thou sayest, that either I must slay them or they me, then would I far rather suffer death at their hands than work them any harm. But as for thee, thou art all the worse a man for having spoken thus."

After that Mord fares home. A little after Mord goes to see Njal's sons, and he talks much with those brothers and Kari.

"I have been told," says Mord, "that Hauskuld has said that thou, Skarphedinn, hast broken the atonement made with Lyting; but I was made aware also that he thought that thou hadst meant some treachery against him when ye two fared to Markfleet. But still, methinks that was no less treachery when he bade you to a feast at his house, and stowed you away in an outhouse that was farthest from the house, and wood was then heaped round the outhouse all night, and he meant to burn you all inside; but it so happened that Hogni Gunnar's son came that night, and naught came of their onslaught, for they were afraid of him. After that he followed you on your way and great band of men with him, then he meant to make another onslaught on you, and set Grani Gunnar's son, and Gunnar Lambi's son to kill thee; but their hearts failed them, and they dared not to fall on thee."

But when he had spoken thus, first of all they spoke against it, but the end of it was that they believed him, and from that day forth a coldness sprung up on their part towards Hauskuld, and they scarcely ever spoke to him when they met; but Hauskuld showed them little deference, and so things went on for a while.

Next harvest Hauskuld fared east to Swinefell to a feast, and Flosi gave him a hearty welcome. Hildigunna was there too. Then Flosi spoke to Hauskuld and said—

"Hildigunna tells me that there is great coldness with you and Njal's sons, and methinks that is ill, and I will beg thee not to ride west, but I will get thee a homestead in Skaptarfell, and I will send my brother, Thorgeir, to dwell at Ossaby."

"Then some will say," says Hauskuld, "that I am flying thence for fear's sake, and that I will not have said."

"Then it is more likely that great trouble will arise," says Flosi.

"Ill is that then," says Hauskuld, "for I would rather fall untoned, than that many should reap ill for my sake."

Hauskuld busked him to ride home a few nights after, but Flosi gave him a scarlet cloak, and it was embroidered with needlework down to the waist.

Hauskuld rode home to Ossaby, and now all is quiet for a while.

Hauskuld was so much beloved that few men were his foes, but the same ill-will went on between him and Njal's sons the whole winter through.

Njal had taken as his foster-child, Thord, the son of Kari. He had also fostered Thorhall, the son of Asgrim Ellidagrim's son. Thorhall was a strong man, and hardy both in body and mind, he had learnt so much law that he was the third greatest lawyer in Iceland.

Next spring was an early spring, and men are busy sowing their corn.

CHAPTER CIX. OF MORD AND NJAL'S SONS.

It happened one day that Mord came to Bergthorsknoll. He and Kari and Njal's sons fell a-talking at once, and Mord slanders Hauskuld after his wont, and has now many new tales to tell, and does naught but egg Skarphedinn and them on to slay Hauskuld, and said he would be beforehand with them if they did not fall on him at once.

"I will let thee have thy way in this," says Skarphedinn, "if thou wilt fare with us, and have some hand in it."

"That I am ready to do," says Mord, and so they bound that fast with promises, and he was to come there that evening.

Bergthora asked Njal—

"What are they talking about out of doors?"

"I am not in their counsels," says Njal, "but I was seldom left out of them when their plans were good."

Skarphedinn did not lie down to rest that evening, nor his brothers, nor Kari.

That same night, when it was well-nigh spent, came Mord Valgard's son, and Njal's sons and Kari took their weapons and rode away. They fared till they came to Ossaby, and bided there by a fence. The weather was good, and the sun just risen.

CHAPTER CX. THE SLAYING OF HAU SKULD, THE PRIEST OF WHITENESS.

About that time Hauskuld, the Priest of Whiteness, awoke; he put on his clothes, and threw over him his cloak, Flosi's gift. He took his corn-sieve, and had his sword in his other hand, and walks towards the fence, and sows the corn as he goes.

Skarphedinn and his band had agreed that they would all give him a wound. Skarphedinn sprang up from behind the fence, but when Hauskuld saw him he wanted to turn away, then Skarphedinn ran up to him and said—

"Don't try to turn on thy heel, Whiteness priest," and hews at him, and the blow came on his head, and he fell on his knees. Hauskuld said these words when he fell—

"God help me, and forgive you!"

Then they all ran up to him and gave him wounds.

After that Mord said—

"A plan comes into my mind."

"What is that?" says Skarphedinn.

"That I shall fare home as soon as I can, but after that I will fare up to Gritwater, and tell them the tidings, and say 'tis an ill deed; but I know surely that Thorgerda will ask me to give notice of the slaying, and I will do that, for that will be the surest way to spoil their suit. I will also send a man to Ossaby, and know how soon they take any counsel in the matter, and that man will learn all these tidings thence, and I will make believe that I have heard them from him."

"Do so by all means," says Skarphedinn.

Those brothers fared home, and Kari with them, and when they came home they told Njal the tidings.

"Sorrowful tidings are these," says Njal, "and such are ill to hear, for sooth to say this grief touches me so nearly, that methinks it were better to have lost two of my sons and that Hauskuld lived."

"It is some excuse for thee," says Skarphedinn, "that thou art an old man, and it is to be looked for that this touches thee nearly."

"But this," says Njal, "no less than old age, is why I grieve, that I know better than thou what will come after."

"What will come after?" says Skarphedinn.

"My death," says Njal, "and the death of my wife and of all my sons."

"What dost thou foretell for me?" says Kari.

"They will have hard work to go against thy good fortune, for thou wilt be more than a match for all of them."

This one thing touched Njal so nearly that he could never speak of it without shedding tears.

CHAPTER CXI. OF HILDIGUNNA AND MORD VALGARD'S SON.

Hildigunna woke up and found that Hauskuld was away out of his bed.

"Hard have been my dreams," she said, "and not good; but go and search for *him*, Hauskuld."

So they searched for him about the homestead and found him not.

By that time she had dressed herself; then she goes and two men with her, to the fence, and there they find Hauskuld slain.

Just then, too, came up Mord Valgard's son's shepherd, and told her that Njal's sons had gone down thence, "and," he said, "Skarphedinn called out to me and gave notice of the slaying as done by him."

"It were a manly deed," she says, "if one man had been at it."

She took the cloak and wiped off all the blood with it, and wrapped the gouts of gore up in it, and so folded it together and laid it up in her chest.

Now she sent a man up to Gritwater to tell the tidings thither, but Mord was there before him, and had already told the tidings. There, too, was come Kettle of the Mark.

Thorgerda said to Kettle—

"Now is Hauskuld dead as we know, and now bear in mind what thou promisedst to do when thou tookest him for thy foster-child."

"It may well be," says Kettle, "that I promised very many things then, for I thought not that these days would ever befall us that have now come to pass; but yet I am come into a strait, for 'nose is next of kin to eyes,' since I have Njal's daughter to wife."

"Art thou willing, then," says Thorgerda, "that Mord should give notice of the suit for the slaying?"

"I know not that," says Kettle, "for methinks ill comes from him more often than good."

But as soon as ever Mord began to speak to Kettle he fared the same as others, in that he thought as though Mord would be true to him, and so the end of their council was that Mord should give notice of the slaying, and get ready the suit in every way before the Thing.

Then Mord fared down to Ossaby, and thither came nine neighbours who dwelt nearest the spot.

Mord had ten men with him. He shows the neighbours Hauskuld's wounds, and takes witness to the hurts, and names a man as the dealer of every wound save one; that he made as though he knew not who had dealt it, but that wound he had dealt himself. But the slaying he gave notice of at Skarphedinn's hand, and the wounds at his brothers' and Kari's.

After that he called on nine neighbours who dwelt nearest the spot to ride away from home to the Althing on the inquest.

After that he rode home. He scarce ever met Njal's sons, and when he did meet them, he was cross, and that was part of their plan.

The slaying of Hauskuld was heard over all the land, and was ill-spoken of. Njal's sons went to see Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and asked him for aid.

"Ye very well know that ye may look that I shall help you in all great suits, but still my heart is heavy about this suit, for there are many who have the blood feud, and this slaying is ill-spoken of over all the land."

Now Njal's sons fare home.

CHAPTER CXII. THE PEDIGREE OF GUDMUND THE POWERFUL.

There was a man named Gudmund the powerful, who dwelt at Modruvale in Eyjafirð. He was the son of Eyjolf the son of Einar. Gudmund was a mighty chief, wealthy in goods; he had in his house a hundred hired servants. He overbore in rank and weight all the chiefs in the north country, so that some left their homesteads, but some he put to death, and some gave up their priest-hoods for his sake, and from him are come the greatest part of all the picked and famous families in the land, such as "the Point-dwellers" and the "Sturlungs" and the "Hvamdwellers," and the "Fleetmen," and Kettle the bishop, and many of the greatest men.

Gudmund was a friend of Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and so he hoped to get his help.

CHAPTER CXIII. OF SNORRI THE PRIEST, AND HIS STOCK.

There was a man named Snorri, who was surnamed the Priest. He dwelt at Helgafell before Gudruna Oswif's daughter bought the land of him, and dwelt there till she died of old age; but Snorri then went and dwelt at Hvamsfirðir on Sælingdale's tongue. Thorgrim was the name of Snorri's father, and he was a son of Thorstein cod-catcher. Snorri was a great friend of Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and he looked for help there also. Snorri was the wisest and shrewdest of all these men in Iceland who had not the gift of foresight. He was good to his friends, but grim to his foes.

At that time there was a great riding to the Thing out of all the Quarters, and men had many suits set on foot.

CHAPTER CXIV. OF FLOSI THORD'S SON.

Flosi hears of Hauskuld's slaying, and that brings him much grief and wrath, but still he kept his feelings well in hand. He was told how the suit had been set on foot, as has been said, for Hauskuld's slaying, and he said little about it. He sent word to Hall of the Side, his father-in-law, and to Ljot his son, that they must gather in a great company at the Thing. Ljot was thought the most hopeful man for a chief away there east. It had been foretold that if he could ride three summers running to the Thing, and come safe and sound home, that then he would be the greatest chief in all his family, and the oldest man. He had then ridden one summer to the Thing, and now he meant to ride the second time.

Flosi sent word to Kol Thorstein's son, and Glum the son of Hildir the old, the son of Gerleif, the son of Aunund wallet-back, and to Modolf Kettle's son, and they all rode to meet Flosi.

Hall gave his word, too, to gather a great company, and Flosi rode till he came to Kirkby, to Surt Asbjorn's son. Then Flosi sent after Kolbein Egil's son, his brother's son, and he came to him there. Thence he rode to Headbrink. There dwelt Thorgrim the showy, the son of Thorkel the fair. Flosi begged him to ride to the Althing with him, and he said yea to the journey, and spoke thus to Flosi—

"Often hast thou been more glad, master, than thou art now, but thou hast some right to be so."

"Of a truth," said Flosi, "that hath now come on my hands, which I would give all my goods that it had never happened. Ill seed has been sown, and so an ill crop will spring from it."

Thence he rode over Arnstakksheath, and so to Solheim that evening. There dwelt Lodmund Wolf's son, but he was a great friend of Flosi, and there he stayed that night, and next morning Lodmund rode with him into the Dale.

There dwelt Runolf, the son of Wolf Aupriest.

Flosi said to Runolf—

"Here we shall have true stories as to the slaying of Hauskuld, the Priest of Whiteness. Thou art a truthful man, and hast got at the truth by asking, and I will trust to all that thou tellest me as to what was the cause of quarrel between them."

"There is no good in mincing the matter," said Runolf, "but we must say outright that he has been slain for less than no cause; and his death is a great grief to all men. No one thinks it so much a loss as Njal, his foster-father."

"Then they will be ill off for help from men," says Flosi; "and they will find no one to speak up for them."

"So it will be," says Runolf, "unless it be otherwise foredoomed."

"What has been done in the suit?" says Flosi.

"Now the neighbours have been summoned on the inquest," says Runolf, "and due notice given of the suit for manslaughter."

"Who took that step?" asks Flosi.

"Mord Valgard's son," says Runolf.

"How far is that to be trusted?" says Flosi.

"He is of my kin," says Runolf; "but still, if I tell the truth of him, I must say that more men reap ill than good from him. But this one thing I will ask of thee, Flosi, that thou givest rest to thy

wrath, and takest the matter up in such a way as may lead to the least trouble. For Njal will make a good offer, and so will others of the best men."

"Ride thou then to the Thing, Runolf," said Flosi, "and thy words shall have much weight with me, unless things turn out worse than they should."

After that they cease speaking about it, and Runolf promised to go to the Thing.

Runolf sent word to Hatr the wise, his kinsman, and he rode thither at once.

Thence Flosi rode to Ossaby.

CHAPTER CXV. OF FLOSI AND HILDIGUNNA.

Hildigunna was out of doors, and said, "Now shall all the men of my household be out of doors when Flosi rides into the yard; but the women shall sweep the house and deck it with hangings, and make ready the high-seat for Flosi."

Then Flosi rode into the town, and Hildigunna turned to him and said—

"Come in safe and sound and happy kinsman, and my heart is fain at thy coming hither."

"Here," says Flosi, "we will break our fast, and then we will ride on."

Then their horses were tethered, and Flosi went into the sitting-room and sat him down, and spurned the high-seat away from him on the dais, and said—

"I am neither king nor earl, and there is no need to make a high-seat for me to sit on, nor is there any need to make a mock of me."

Hildigunna was standing close by, and said—

"It is ill if it mislikes thee, for this we did with a whole heart."

"If thy heart is whole towards me, then what I do will praise itself if it be well done, but it will blame itself if it be ill done."

Hildigunna laughed a cold laugh, and said—

"There is nothing new in that, we will go nearer yet ere we have done."

She sat her down by Flosi, and they talked long and low. After that the board was laid, and Flosi and his band washed their hands. Flosi looked hard at the towel and saw that it was all in rags, and had one end torn off. He threw it down on the bench and would not wipe himself with it, but tore off a piece of the table-cloth, and wiped himself with that, and then threw it to his men.

After that Flosi sat down to the board and bade men eat.

Then Hildigunna came into the room and went before Flosi, and threw her hair off her eyes and wept.

"Heavy-hearted art thou now, kinswoman," said Flosi, "when thou weepest, but still it is well that thou shouldst weep for a good husband."

"What vengeance or help shall I have of thee?" she says.

"I will follow up thy suit," said Flosi, "to the utmost limit of the law, or strive for that atonement which good men and true shall say that we ought to have as full amends."

"Hauskuld would avenge thee," she said, "if he had the blood-feud after thee."

"Thou lackest not grimness," answered Flosi, "and what thou wantest is plain."

"Arnor Ornlóf's son, of Forswaterwood," said Hildigunna, "had done less wrong towards Thord Frey's priest thy father; and yet thy brothers Kolbein and Egil slew him at Skaptarfells-Thing."

Then Hildigunna went back into the hall and unlocked her chest, and then she took out the cloak, Flosi's gift, and in it Hauskuld had been slain, and there she had kept it, blood and all. Then she went back into the sitting room with the cloak; she went up silently to Flosi. Flosi had just then eaten his full, and the board was cleared. Hildigunna threw the cloak over Flosi, and the gore rattled down all over him.

Then she spoke and said—

"This cloak, Flosi, thou gavest to Hauskuld, and now I will give it back to thee; he was slain in it, and I call God and all good men to witness, that I adjure thee, by all the might of thy Christ, and by thy manhood and bravery, to take vengeance for all those wounds

which he had on his dead body, or else to be called every man's dastard."

Flosi threw the cloak off him and hurled it into her lap, and said—

"Thou art the greatest hell-hag, and thou wishest that we should take that course which will be the worst for all of us. But 'women's counsel is ever cruel!'"

Flosi was so stirred at this, that sometimes he was bloodred in the face, and sometimes ashy pale as withered grass, and sometimes blue as death.

Flosi and his men rode away; he rode to Holtford, and there waits for the sons of Sigfus and other of his men.

Ingialld dwelt at the Springs; he was the brother of Rodny, Hauskuld Njal's son's mother. Ingialld had to wife Thraslauga, the daughter of Egil, the son of Thord Frey's priest. Flosi sent word to Ingialld to come to him, and Ingialld went at once, with fourteen men. They were all of his household. Ingialld was a tall man and a strong, and slow to meddle with other men's business, one of the bravest of men, and very bountiful to his friends.

Flosi greeted him well, and said to him, "Great trouble hath now come on me and my brothers-in-law, and it is hard to see our way out of it; I beseech thee not to part from my suit until this trouble is past and gone."

"I am come into a strait myself," said Ingialld, "for the sake of the ties that there are between me and Njal and his sons, and other great matters which stand in the way."

"I thought," said Flosi, "when I gave away my brother's daughter to thee, that thou gavest me thy word to stand by me in every suit."

"It is most likely," says Ingialld, "that I shall do so, but still I will now, first of all, ride home, and thence to the Thing."

CHAPTER CXVI. OF FLOSI AND MORD AND THE SONS OF SIGFUS.

The sons of Sigfus heard how Flosi was at Holtford, and they rode thither to meet him, and there were Kettle of the Mark, and Lambi his brother, Thorkell and Mord, the sons of Sigfus, Sigmund their brother, and Lambi Sigurd's son, and Gunnar Lambi's son, and Grani Gunnar's son, and Vebrand Hamond's son.

Flosi stood up to meet them, and greeted them gladly. So they went down to the river. Flosi had the whole story from them about the slaying, and there was no difference between them and Kettle of the Mark's story.

Flosi spoke to Kettle of the Mark, and said—

"This now I ask of thee; how tightly are your hearts knit as to this suit, thou and the other sons of Sigfus?"

"My wish is," said Kettle, "that there should be peace between us, but yet I have sworn an oath not to part from this suit till it has been brought somehow to an end, and to lay my life on it."

"Thou art a good man and true," said Flosi, "and it is well to have such men with one."

Then Grani Gunnar's son and Lambi Sigurd's son both spoke together, and said—

"We wish for outlawry and death."

"It is not given us," said Flosi, "both to share and choose, we must take what we can get."

"I have had it in my heart," says Grani, "ever since they slew Thrain by Markfleet, and after that his son Hauskuld, never to be atoned with them by a lasting peace, for I would willingly stand by when they were all slain, every man of them."

"Thou hast stood so near to them," said Flosi, "that thou mightest have avenged these things hadst thou had the heart and manhood. Methinks thou and many others now ask for what ye would give much money hereafter never to have had a share in. I see this clearly, that though we slay Njal or his sons, still they are men of so great worth, and of such good family, that there will be such a blood feud and hue and cry after them, that we shall have to fall on our knees before many a man, and beg for help, ere we get an atonement and find our way out of this strait. Ye may make up your minds, then, that many will become poor who before had great goods, but some of you will lose both goods and life."

Mord Valgard's Son rode to meet Flosi, and said he would ride to the Thing with him with all his men. Flosi took that well,

and raised a matter of a wedding with him, that he should give away Rannveiga his daughter to Starkad Flosi's brother's son, who dwelt at Staffell. Flosi did this because he thought he would so make sure both of his faithfulness and force.

Mord took the wedding kindly, but handed the matter over to Gizur the white, and bade him talk about it at the Thing.

Mord had to wife Thorkatla, Gizur the white's daughter.

They two, Mord and Flosi, rode both together to the Thing, and talked the whole day, and no man knew aught of their counsel.

CHAPTER CXVII. NJAL AND SKARPHEDINN TALK TOGETHER.

Now, we must say how Njal said to Skarphedinn—

"What plan have ye laid down for yourselves, thou and thy brothers and Kari?"

"Little reck we of dreams in most matters," said Skarphedinn; "but if thou must know, we shall ride to Tongue to Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and thence to the Thing; but what meanest thou to do about thine own journey, father?"

"I shall ride to the Thing," says Njal, "for it belongs to my honour not to be severed from your suit so long as I live. I ween that many men will have good words to say of me, and so I shall stand you in good stead, and do you no harm."

There, too, was Thorhall Asgrim's son, and Njal's foster-son. The sons of Njal laughed at him because he was clad in a coat of russet, and asked how long he meant to wear that?

"I shall have thrown it off," he said, "when I have to follow up the blood-feud for my foster father."

"There will ever be most good in thee," said Njal, "when there is most need of it."

So they all busked them to ride away from home, and were nine thirty men in all, and rode till they came to Thursowater. Then came after them Njal's kinsmen, Thorleif crow, and Thorgrim the big; they were Holt-Thorir's sons, and offered their help and following to Njal's sons, and they took that gladly.

So they rode altogether across Thursowater, until they came on Laxwater bank, and took a rest and baited their horses there, and there Hjallti's Skeggi's son came to meet them, and Njal's sons fell to talking with him, and they talked long and low.

"Now, I will show," said Hjallti, "that I am not black-hearted; Njal has asked me for help, and I have agreed to it, and given my word to aid him; he has often given me and many others the worth of it in cunning counsel."

Hjallti tells Njal all about Flosi's doings. They sent Thorhall on to Tongue to tell Asgrim that they would be there that evening; and Asgrim made ready at once, and was out of doors to meet them when Njal rode into the town.

Njal was clad in a blue cape, and had a felt hat on his head, and a small axe in his hand. Asgrim helped Njal off his horse, and led him and sate him down in his own seat. After that they all went in, Njal's sons and Kari. Then Asgrim went out.

Hjallti wished to turn away, and thought there were too many there; but Asgrim caught hold of his reins, and said he should never have his way in riding off, and made men unsaddle their horses, and led Hjallti in and sate him down by Njal's aide; but Thorleif and his brother sat on the other bench and their men with them.

Asgrim sate him down on a stool before Njal, and asked—

"What says thy heart about our matter?"

"It speaks rather heavily," says Njal, "for I am afraid that we shall have no lucky men with us in the suit; but I would, friend, that thou shouldest send after all the men who belong to thy Thing, and ride to the Althing with me."

"I have always meant to do that," says Asgrim; "and this I will promise thee at the same time—that I will never leave thy cause while I can get any men to follow me."

But all those who were in the house thanked him, and said, that was bravely spoken. They were there that night, but the day after all Asgrim's band came thither.

And after that they all rode together till they come up on the Thingfield, and fit up their booths.

CHAPTER CXVIII. ASGRIM AND NJAL'S SONS PRAY MEN FOR HELP.

By that time Flosi had come to the Thing, and filled all his booths. Runolf filled the Dale-dwellers' booths, and Mord the booths of the men from Rangriver. Hall of the Side had long since come from the east, but scarce any of the other men; but still Hall of the Side had come with a great band, and joined this at once to Flosi's company, and begged him to take an atonement and to make peace.

Hall was a wise man and good-hearted, Flosi answered him well in everything, but gave way in nothing.

Hall asked what men had promised him help? Flosi named Mord Valgard's son, and said he had asked for his daughter at the hand of his kinsman Starkad.

Hall said she was a good match, but it was ill dealing with Mord, "and that thou wilt put to the proof ere this Thing be over."

After that they ceased talking.

One day Njal and Asgrim had a long talk in secret.

Then all at once Asgrim sprang up and said to Njal's sons—

"We must set about seeking friends, that we may not be overborne by force; for this suit will be followed up boldly."

Then Asgrim went out, and Helgi Njal's son next; then Kari Solmund's son; then Grim Njal's son; then Skarphedinn; then Thorhall; then Thorgrim the big; then Thorleif crow.

They went to the booth of Gizur the white and inside it. Gizur stood up to meet them, and bade them sit down and drink.

"Not thitherward," says Asgrim, "tends our way, and we will speak our errand out loud, and not mutter and mumble about it. What help shall I have from thee, as thou art my kinsman?"

"Jorunn my sister," said Gizur, "would wish that I should not shrink from standing by thee; and so it shall be now and hereafter, that we will both of us have the same fate."

Asgrim thanked him, and went away afterwards.

Then Skarphedinn asked, "Whither shall we go now?"

"To the booths of the men of Olfus," says Asgrim.

So they went thither, and Asgrim asked whether Skapti Thorod's son were in the booth? He was told that he was. Then they went inside the booth.

Skapti sate on the cross bench, and greeted Asgrim, and he took the greeting well.

Skapti offered Asgrim a seat by his side, but Asgrim said he should only stay there a little while, "but still we have an errand to thee."

"Let me hear it," says Skapti.

"I wish to beg thee for thy help, that thou wilt stand by us in our suit."

"One thing I had hoped," says Skapti, "and that is, that neither you nor your troubles would ever come into my dwelling."

"Such things are ill-spoken," says Asgrim, "when a man is the last to help others, when most lies on his aid."

"Who is yon man," says Skapti, "before whom four men walk, a big burly man, and pale-faced, unlucky-looking, well-knit, and troll-like?"

"My name is Skarphedinn," he answers, "and thou hast often seen me at the Thing; but in this I am wiser than thou, that I have no need to ask what thy name is. Thy name is Skapti Thorod's son, but before thou calledst thyself 'Bristle-poll,' after thou hadst slain Kettle of Elda; then thou shavedst thy poll, and puttest pitch on thy head, and then thou hiredst thralls to cut up a sod of turf, and thou creptest underneath it to spend the night. After that thou wentest to Thorolf Lopt's son of Eyrar, and he took thee on board, and bore thee out here in his meal sacks."

After that Asgrim and his band went out, and Skarphedinn asked—

"Whither shall we go now?"

"To Snorri the Priest's booth," says Asgrim.

Then they went to Snorri's booth. There was a man outside before the booth, and Asgrim asked whether Snorri were in the booth.

The man said he was.

Asgrim went into the booth, and all the others. Snorri was sitting on the cross bench, and Asgrim went and stood before him, and hailed him well.

Snorri took his greeting blithely, and bade him sit down.

Asgrim said he should be only a short time there, "but we have an errand with thee."

Snorri bade him tell it.

"I would," said Asgrim, "that thou wouldst come with me to the court, and stand by me with thy help, for thou art a wise man, and a great man of business."

"Suits fall heavy on us now," says Snorri the Priest, "and now many men push forward against us, and so we are slow to take up the troublesome suits of other men from other quarters."

"Thou mayest stand excused," says Asgrim, "for thou art not in our debt for any service."

"I know," says Snorri, "that thou art a good man and true, and I will promise thee this, that I will not be against thee, and not yield help to thy foes."

Asgrim thanked him, and Snorri the Priest asked—

"Who is that man before whom four go, pale-faced, and sharp-featured, and who shows his front teeth, and has his axe aloft on his shoulder?"

"My name is Hedinn," he says, "but some men call me Skarphedinn by my full name; but what more hast thou to say to me?"

"This," said Snorri the Priest, "that methinks thou art a well-knit, ready-handed man, but yet I guess that the best part of thy good fortune is past, and I ween thou hast not long to live."

"That is well," says Skarphedinn, "for that is a debt we all have to pay, but still it were more needful to avenge thy father than to foretell my fate in this way."

"Many have said that before," says Snorri, "and I will not be angry at such words."

After that they went out, and got no help there. Then they fared to the booths of the men of Skagafirth. There Hafr the wealthy had his booth. The mother of Hafr was named Thoruna, she was a daughter of Asbjorn baldpate of Myrka, the son of Hrosbjorn.

Asgrim and his band went into the booth, and Hafr sate in the midst of it, and was talking to a man.

Asgrim went up to him, and hailed him well; he took it kindly, and bade him sit down.

"This I would ask of thee," said Asgrim, "that thou wouldst grant me and my sons-in-law help."

Hafr answered sharp and quick, and said he would have nothing to do with their troubles.

"But still I must ask who that pale-faced man is before whom four men go, so ill-looking, as though he had come out of the sea-craggs."

"Never mind, milksop that thou art!" said Skarphedinn, "who I am, for I will dare to go forward wherever thou standest before me, and little would I fear though such striplings were in my path. 'Twere rather thy duty, too, to get back thy sister Swanlauga, whom Eydis ironword and his messmate Stediakoll took away out of thy house, but thou didst not dare to do aught against them."

"Let us go out," said Asgrim, "there is no hope of help here."

Then they went out to the booths of men of Modruvale, and asked whether Gudmund the powerful were in the booth, but they were told he was.

Then they went into the booth. There was a high seat in the midst of it, and there sate Gudmund the powerful.

Asgrim went and stood before him, and hailed him.

Gudmund took his greeting well, and asked him to sit down.

"I will not sit," said Asgrim, "but I wish to pray thee for help, for thou art a bold man and a mighty chief."

"I will not be against thee," said Gudmund, "but if I see fit to yield thee help, we may well talk of that afterwards," and so he treated them well and kindly in every way.

Asgrim thanked him for his words, and Gudmund said—

"There is one man in your band at whom I have gazed for awhile, and he seems to me more terrible than most men that I have seen."

"Which is he?" says Asgrim.

"Four go before him," says Gudmund; "dark brown is his hair, and pale is his face; tall of growth and sturdy. So quick and shift-

in his manliness, that I would rather have his following than that of ten other men; but yet the man is unlucky-looking."

"I know," said Skarphedinn, "that thou speakest at me, but it does not go in the same way as to luck with me and thee. I have blame, indeed, from the slaying of Hauskuld, the Whiteness priest, as is fair and right; but both Thorkel foulmouth and Thorir Helgi's son spread abroad bad stories about thee, and that has tried thy temper very much."

Then they went out, and Skarphedinn said—

"Whither shall we go now?"

"To the booths of the men of Lightwater," said Asgrim.

There Thorkel foulmouth had set up his booth.

Thorkel foulmouth had been abroad and worked his way to fame in other lands. He had slain a robber east in Jemtland's wood, and then he fared on east into Sweden, and was a messmate of Saurkvir the churl, and they harried eastward ho; but to the east of Baltic side. Thorkel had to fetch water for them one evening; then he met a wild man of the woods, and struggled against him long; but the end of it was that he slew the wild man. Thence he fared east into Adalsyssla, and there he slew a flying fire-drake. After that he fared back to Sweden, and thence to Norway, and so out to Iceland, and let these deeds of derring do be carved over his shut bed, and on the stool before his high-seat. He fought, too, on Lightwater way with his brothers against Gudmund the powerful, and the men of Lightwater won the day. He and Thorir Helgi's son spread abroad bad stories about Gudmund. Thorkel said there was no man in Iceland with whom he would not fight in single combat, or yield an inch to, if need were. He was called Thorkel foulmouth, because he spared no one with whom he had to do either in word or deed.

CHAPTER CXIX. OF SKARPHEDINN AND THORKEL FOULMOUTH.

Asgrim and his fellows went to Thorkel foulmouth's booth, and Asgrim said then to his companions, "This booth Thorkel foulmouth owns, a great champion, and it were worth much to us to get his help. We must here take heed in everything, for he is self-willed and bad tempered; and now I will beg thee, Skarphedinn, not to let thyself be led into our talk."

Skarphedinn smiled at that. He was so clad, he had on a blue kirtle and gray breeks, and black shoes on his feet, coming high up his leg; he had a silver belt about him, and that same axe in his hand with which he slew Thrain, and which he called the "ogress of war," a round buckler, and a silken band round his brow, and his hair was brushed back behind his ears. He was the most soldier-like of men, and by that all men knew him. He went in his appointed place, and neither before nor behind.

Now they went into the booth and into its inner chamber. Thorkel sate in the middle of the cross-bench, and his men away from him on all sides. Asgrim hailed him, and Thorkel took the greeting well, and Asgrim said to him—

"For this have we come hither, to ask help of thee, and that thou wouldst come to the court with us."

"What need can ye have of my help," said Thorkel, "when ye have already gone to Gudmund; he must surely have promised thee his help?"

"We could not get his help," says Asgrim.

"Then Gudmund thought the suit likely to make him foes," said Thorkel; "and so no doubt it will be, for such deeds are the worst that have ever been done; nor do I know what can have driven you to come hither to me, and to think that I should be easier to undertake your suit than Gudmund, or that I would back a wrongful quarrel."

Then Asgrim held his peace, and thought it would be hard work to win him over.

Then Thorkel went on and said, "Who is that big and ugly fellow, before whom four men go, pale-faced and sharp-featured, and unlucky-looking, and cross-grained?"

"My name is Skarphedinn," said Skarphedinn, "and thou hast no right to pick me out, a guiltless man, for thy railing. It never has befallen me to make my father bow down before me, or to have fought against him, as thou didst with thy father. Thou hast ridden

little to the Althing, or toiled in quarrels at it, and no doubt it is handier for thee to mind thy milking pails at home than to be here at Axewater in idleness. But stay, it were as well if thou pickedst out from thy teeth that steak of mare's rump which thou atest ere thou rodest to the Thing, while thy shepherd looked on all the while, and wondered that thou couldst work such filthiness!"

Then Thorkel sprang up in mickle wrath, and clutched his short sword and said—

"This sword I got in Sweden when I slew the greatest champion, but since then I have slain many a man with it, and as soon as ever I reach thee I will drive it through thee, and thou shalt take that for thy bitter words."

Skarphedinn stood with his axe aloft, and smiled scornfully and said—

"This axe I had in my hand when I leapt twelve ells across Markfleet, and slew Thrain Sigfus' son, and eight of them stood before me, and none of them could touch me. Never have I aimed weapon at man that I have not smitten him."

And with that he tore himself from his brothers, and Kari his brother-in-law, and strode forward to Thorkel.

Then Skarphedinn said—

"Now, Thorkel foulmouth, do one of these two things: sheathe thy sword and sit thee down, or I drive the axe into thy head and cleave thee down to the chine."

Then Thorkel sate him down and sheathed the sword, and such a thing never happened to him either before or since.

Then Asgrim and his band go out, and Skarphedinn said—

"Whither shall we now go?"

"Home to our booths," answered Asgrim.

"Then we fare hack to our booths wearied of begging," says Skarphedinn.

"In many places," said Asgrim, "hast thou been rather sharp-tongued, but here now, in what Thorkel had a share methinks thou hast only treated him as is fitting."

Then they went home to their booths, and told Njal, word for word, all that had been done.

"Things," he said, "draw on to what must be."

Now Gudmund the powerful heard what had passed between Thorkel and Skarphedinn, and said—

"Ye all know how things fared between us and the men of Lightwater, but I have never suffered such scorn and mocking at their hands as has befallen Thorkel from Skarphedinn, and this is just as it should be."

Then he said to Einar of Thvera, his brother, "Thou shalt go with all my band, and stand by Njal's sons when the courts go out to try suits; but if they need help next summer, then I myself will yield them help."

Einar agreed to that, and sent and told Asgrim, and Asgrim said—

"There is no man like Gudmund for nobleness of mind," and then he told it to Njal.

CHAPTER CXX. OF THE PLEADING OF THE SUIT.

The next day Asgrim, and Gizur the white, and Hjalalti Skeggi's son, and Einar of Thvera, met together. There too was Mord Valgard's son; he had then let the suit fall from his hand, and given it over to the sons of Sigfus.

Then Asgrim spoke.

"Thee first I speak to about this matter, Gizur the white, and thee Hjalalti, and thee Einar, that I may tell you how the suit stands. It will be known to all of you that Mord took up the suit, but the truth of the matter is, that Mord was at Hauskuld's slaying, and wounded him with that wound, for giving which no man was named. It seems to me, then, that this suit must come to nought by reason of a lawful flaw."

"Then we will plead it at once," says Hjalalti.

"It is not good counsel," said Thorhall Asgrim's son, "that this should not be hidden until the courts are set."

"How so?" asks Hjalalti.

"If," said Thorhall, "they knew now at once that the suit has been wrongly set on foot, then they may still save the suit by sending a

man home from the Thing, and summoning the neighbours from home over again, and calling on them to ride to the Thing, and then the suit will be lawfully set on foot."

"Thou art a wise man, Thorhall," say they, "and we will take thy counsel."

After that each man went to his booth.

The sons of Sigfus gave notice of their suits at the Hill of Laws, and asked in what Quarter Courts they lay, and in what house in the district the defendants dwelt. But on the Friday night the courts were to go out to try suits, and so the Thing was quiet up to that day.

Many sought to bring about an atonement between them, but Flosi was steadfast; but others were still more wordy, and things looked ill.

Now the time comes when the courts were to go out, on the Friday evening. Then the whole body of men at the Thing went to the courts. Flosi stood south at the court of the men of Rangriver, and his band with him. There with him was Hall of the Side, and Runolf of the Dale, Wolf Aupriest's son, and those other men who had promised Flosi help.

But north of the court of the men of Rangriver stood Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and Gizur the white, Hjalalti Skeggi's son, and Einar of Thvera. But Njal's sons were at home at their booth, and Kari and Thorleif crow, and Thorgeir Craggeir, and Thorgrim the big. They sate all with their weapons, and their band looked safe from onslaught.

Njal had already prayed the judges to go into the court, and now the sons of Sigfus plead their suit. They took witness and bade Njal's sons to listen to their oath; after that they took their oath, and then they declared their suit; then they brought forward witness of the notice, then they bade the neighbours on the inquest to take their seats, then they called on Njal's sons to challenge the inquest.

Then up stood Thorhall Asgrim's son, and took witness, and forbade the inquest by a protest to utter their finding; and his ground was, that he who had given notice of the suit was truly under the ban of the law, and was himself an outlaw.

"Of whom speakest thou this?" says Flosi.

"Mord Valgard's son," said Thorhall, "fared to Hauskuld's slaying with Njal's sons, and wounded him with that wound for which no man was named when witness was taken to the death-wounds; and ye can say nothing against this, and so the suit comes to naught."

CHAPTER CXXI. OF THE AWARD OF ATONEMENT BETWEEN FLOSI AND NJAL.

Then Njal stood up and said—

"This I pray, Hall of the Side, and Flosi, and all the sons of Sigfus, and all our men too, that ye will not go away, but listen to my words."

They did so, and then he spoke thus—

"It seems to me as though this suit were come to naught, and it is likely it should, for it hath sprung from an ill root. I will let you all know that I loved Hauskuld more than my own sons, and when I heard that he was slain, methought the sweetest light of my eyes was quenched, and I would rather have lost all my sons, and that he were alive. Now I ask thee, Hall of the Side, and thee Runolf of the Dale, and thee Hjalalti Skeggi's son, and thee Einar of Thvera, and thee Hafr the wise, that I may be allowed to make an atonement for the slaying of Hauskuld on my sons' behalf; and I wish that those men who are best fitted to do so shall utter the award."

Gizur, and Hafr, and Einar, spoke each on their own part, and prayed Flosi to take an atonement, and promised him their friendship in return.

Flosi answered them well in all things, but still did not give his word.

Then Hall of the Side said to Flosi—

"Wilt thou now keep thy word, and grant me my boon which thou hast already promised me, when I put beyond sea Thorgrim,

the son of Kettle the fat, thy kinsman, when he had slain Halli the red."

"I will grant it thee, father-in-law," said Flosi, "for that alone wilt thou ask which will make my honour greater than it erewhile was."

"Then," said Hall, "my wish is that thou shouldst be quickly atoned, and lettest good men and true make an award, and so buy the friendship of good and worthy men."

"I will let you all know," said Flosi, "that I will do according to the word of Hall, my father-in-law, and other of the worthiest men, that he and others of the best men on each side, lawfully named, shall make this award. Methinks Njal is worthy that I should grant him this."

Njal thanked him and all of them, and others who were by thanked them too, and said that Flosi had behaved well.

Then Flosi said—

"Now will I name my daysmen [arbitrators]—First, I name Hall, my father-in-law; Auzur from Broadwater; Surt Asbjorn's son of Kirkby; Modolf Kettle's son—he dwelt then at Asar—"Hafr the wise; and Runolf of the Dale; and it is scarce worth while to say that these are the fittest men out of all my company."

Now he bade Njal to name his daysmen, and then Njal stood up, and said—

"First of these I name, Asgrim Ellidagrim's son; and Hjalalti Skeggi's son; Gizur the white; Einar of Thvera; Snorri the priest; and Gudmund the powerful."

After that Njal and Flosi, and the sons of Sigfus shook hands, and Njal pledged his hand on behalf of all his sons, and of Kari, his son-in-law, that they would hold to what those twelve men doomed; and one might say that the whole body of men at the Thing was glad at that.

Then men were sent after Snorri and Gudmund, for they were in their booths.

Then it was given out that the judges in this award would sit in the Court of Laws, but all the others were to go away.

CHAPTER CXXII. OF THE JUDGES.

Then Snorri the priest spoke thus—"Now are we here twelve judges to whom these suits are handed over, now I will beg you all that we may have no stumbling-blocks in these suits, so that they may not be atoned."

"Will ye," said Gudmund, "award either the lesser or the greater outlawry? Shall they be banished from the district, or from the whole land?"

"Neither of them," says Snorri, "for those banishments are often ill fulfilled, and men have been slain for that sake, and atonements broken, but I will award so great a money fine that no man shall have had a higher price here in the land than Hauskuld."

They all spoke well of his words.

Then they talked over the matter, and could not agree which should first utter how great he thought the fine ought to be, and so the end of it was that they cast lots, and the lot fell on Snorri to utter it.

Then Snorri said, "I will not sit long over this, I will now tell you what my utterance is, I will let Hauskuld be atoned for with triple manfines, but that is six hundred in silver. Now ye shall change it, if ye think it too much or too little."

They said that they would change it in nothing.

"This too shall be added," he said, "that all the money shall be paid down here at the Thing."

Then Gizur the white spoke and said—

"Methinks that can hardly be, for they will not have enough money to pay their fines."

"I know what Snorri wishes," said Gudmund the powerful, "he wants that all we daysmen should give such a sum as our bounty will bestow, and then many will do as we do."

Hall of the Side thanked him, and said he would willingly give as much as any one else gave, and then all the other daysmen agreed to that.

After that they went away, and settled between them that Hall should utter the award at the Court of Laws.

So the bell was rung, and all men went to the Court of Laws, and Hall of the Side stood up and spoke—

"In this suit, in which we have come to an award, we have been all well agreed, and we have awarded six hundred in silver, and half this sum we the daysmen will pay, but it must all be paid up here at the Thing. But it is my prayer to all the people that each man will give something for God's sake."

All answered well to that, and then Hall took witness to the award, that no one should be able to break it.

Njal thanked them for their award, but Skarphedinn stood by, and held his peace, and smiled scornfully.

Then men went from the Court of Laws and to their booths, but the daysmen gathered together in the freeman's church-yard the money which they had promised to give.

Njal's sons handed over that money which they had by them, and Kari did the same, and that came to a hundred in silver.

Njal took out that money which he had with him, and that was another hundred in silver.

So this money was all brought before the Court of Laws, and then men gave so much, that not a penny was wanting.

Then Njal took a silken scarf and a pair of boots and laid them on the top of the heap.

After that, Hall said to Njal, that he should go to fetch his sons, "but I will go for Flosi, and now each must give the other pledges of peace."

Then Flosi went home to his booth, and spoke to his sons and said, "Now, are our suits come into a fair way of settlement, now are we men atoned, for all the money has been brought together in one place; and now either side is to go and grant the other peace and pledges of good faith. I will therefore ask you this, my sons, not to spoil these things in any way."

Skarphedinn stroked his brow, and smiled scornfully. So they all go to the Court of Laws.

Hall went to meet Flosi and said—

"Go thou now to the Court of Laws, for now all the money has been bravely paid down, and it has been brought together in one place."

Then Flosi bade the sons of Sigfus to go up with him, and they all went out of their booths. They came from the east, but Njal went from the west to the Court of Laws, and the sons with him.

Skarphedinn went to the middle bench and stood there.

Flosi went into the Court of Laws to look closely at his money, and said—

"This money is both great and good, and well paid down, as was to be looked for."

After that he took up the scarf, and waved it, and asked—

"Who may have given this?"

But no man answered him.

A second time he waved the scarf, and asked—

"Who may have given this?" and laughed, but no man answered him.

Then Flosi said—

"How is it that none of you knows who has owned this gear, or is it that none dares to tell me?"

"Who?" said Skarphedinn, "dost thou think, has given it?"

"If thou must know," said Flosi, "then I will tell thee; I think that thy father the 'Beardless Carle' must have given it, for many know not who look at him whether he is more a man than a woman."

"Such words are ill-spoken," said Skarphedinn, "to make game of him, an old man, and no man of any worth has ever done so before. Ye may know, too, that he is a man, for he has had sons by his wife, and few of our kinsfolk have fallen unatoned by our house, so that we have not had vengeance for them."

Then Skarphedinn took to himself the silken scarf, but threw a pair of blue breeks to Flosi, and said he would need them more.

"Why," said Flosi, "should I need these more?"

"Because," said Skarphedinn, "thou art the sweetheart of the Swinefell's goblin, if, as men say, he does indeed turn thee into a woman every ninth night."

Then Flosi spurned the money, and said he would not touch a penny of it, and then he said he would only have one of two things: either that Hauskuld should fall unatoned, or they would have vengeance for him.

Then Flosi would neither give nor take peace, and he said to the sons of Sigfus—

"Go we now home; one fate shall befall us all."

Then they went home to their booth, and Hall said—

"Here most unlucky men have a share in this suit."

Njal and his sons went home to their booth, and Njal said—

"Now comes to pass what my heart told me long ago, that this suit would fall heavy on us."

"Not so," says Skarphedinn; "they can never pursue us by the laws of the land."

"Then that will happen," says Njal, "which will be worse for all of us."

Those men who had given the money spoke about it, and said that they should take it back; but Gudmund the powerful said—

"That shame I will never choose for myself, to take back what I have given away, either here or elsewhere."

"That is well spoken," they said; and then no one would take it back.

Then Snorri the priest said, "My counsel is, that Gizur the white and Hjalalti Skeggi's son keep the money till the next Althing; my heart tells me that no long time will pass ere there may be need to touch this money."

Hjalalti took half the money and kept it safe, but Gizur took the rest.

Then men went home to their booths.

CHAPTER CXXIII. AN ATTACK PLANNED ON NJAL AND HIS SONS.

Flosi summoned all his men up to the "Great Rift," and went thither himself.

So when all his men were come, there were one hundred and twenty of them.

Then Flosi spake thus to the sons of Sigfus—

"In what way shall I stand by you in this quarrel, which will be most to your minds?"

"Nothing will please us," said Gunnar Lambi's son, "until those brothers, Njal's sons, are all slain."

"This," said Flosi, "will I promise to you, ye sons of Sigfus, not to part from this quarrel before one of us bites the dust before the other, I will also know whether there be any man here who will not stand by us in this quarrel."

But they all said they would stand by him.

Then Flosi said—

"Come now all to me, and swear an oath that no man will shrink from this quarrel."

Then all went up to Flosi and swore oaths to him; and then Flosi said—

"We will all of us shake hands on this, that he shall have forfeited life and land who quits this quarrel ere it be over."

These were the chiefs who were with Flosi:—Kol the son of Thorstein broadpaunch, the brother's son of Hall of the Side, Hroald Auzur's son from Broadwater, Auzur son of Anund wallet-back, Thorstein the fair the son of Gerleif, Glum Hildir's son, Modolf Kettle's son, Thorir the son of Thord Illugi's son of Mauratongue, Kolbein and Egil Flosi's kinsmen, Kettle Sigfus' son, and Mord his brother, Ingialld of the Springs, Thorkel and Lambi, Grani Gunnar's son, Gunnar Lambi's son, and Sigmund Sigfus' son, and Hroar from Hromundstede.

Then Flosi said to the sons of Sigfus—

"Choose ye now a leader, whomsoever ye think best fitted; for some one man must needs be chief over the quarrel."

Then Kettle of the Mark answered—

"If the choice is to be left with us brothers, then we will soon choose that this duty should fall on thee; there are many things which lead to this. Thou art a man of great birth, and a mighty chief, stout of heart, and strong of body, and wise withal, and so we think it best that thou shouldst see to all that is needful in the quarrel."

"It is most fitting," said Flosi, "that I should agree to undertake this as your prayer asks; and now I will lay down the course which we shall follow, and my counsel is, that each man ride home from the Thing and look after his household during the summer, so long

as men's haymaking lasts. I, too, will ride home, and be at home this summer; but when that Lord's day comes on which winter is eight weeks off, then I will let them sing me a mass at home, and afterwards ride west across Loomnips Sand; each of our men shall have two horses. I will not swell our company beyond those which have now taken the oath, for we have enough and to spare if all keep true tryst. I will ride all the Lord's day and the night as well, but at even on the second day of the week, I shall ride up to Threecorner ridge about mid-even. There shall ye then be all come who have sworn an oath in this matter. But if there be any one who has not come, and who has joined us in this quarrel, then that man shall lose nothing save his life, if we may have our way."

"How does that hang together," said Kettle, "that thou canst ride from home on the Lord's day, and come the second day of the week to Threecorner ridge?"

"I will ride," said Flosi, "up from Skaptartongue, and north of the Eyjafell Jokul, and so down into Godaland, and it may be done if I ride fast. And now I will tell you my whole purpose, that when we meet there all together, we shall ride to Bergthorsknoll with all our band, and fall on Njal's sons with fire and sword, and not turn away before they are all dead. Ye shall hide this plan, for our lives lie on it. And now we will take to our horses and ride home."

Then they all went to their booths.

After that Flosi made them saddle his horses, and they waited for no man, and rode home.

Flosi would not stay to meet Hall his father-in-law, for he knew of a surety that Hall would set his face against all strong deeds.

Njal rode home from the Thing and his sons. They were at home that summer. Njal asked Kari his son-in-law whether he thought at all of riding east to Dyrholms to his own house.

"I will not ride east," answered Kari, "for one fate shall befall me and thy sons."

Njal thanked him, and said that was only what was likely from him. There were nearly thirty fighting men in Njal's house, reckoning the house-carles.

One day it happened that Rodny Hauskuld's daughter, the mother of Hauskuld Njal's son, came to the Springs. Her brother Ingialld greeted her well, but she would not take his greeting, but yet bade him go out with her. Ingialld did so, and went out with her; and so they walked away from the farmyard both together. Then she clutched hold of him and they both sat down, and Rodny said—

"Is it true that thou hast sworn an oath to fall on Njal, and slay him and his sons?"

"True it is," said he.

"A very great dastard art thou," she says, "thou, whom Njal hath thrice saved from outlawry."

"Still it hath come to this," says Ingialld, "that my life lies on it if I do not this."

"Not so," says she, "thou shalt live all the same, and be called a better man, if thou betrayest not him to whom thou oughtest to behave best."

Then she took a linen hood out of her bag, it was clotted with blood all over, and torn and tattered, and said, "This hood, Hauskuld Njal's son, and thy sister's son, had on his head when they slew him; methinks, then, it is ill owing to stand by those from whom this mischief sprang."

"Well!" answers Ingialld, "so it shall be that I will not be against Njal whatever follows after, but still I know that they will turn and throw trouble on me."

"Now mightest thou," said Rodny, "yield Njal and his sons great help, if thou tellest him all these plans."

"That I will not do," says Ingialld, "for then I am every man's dastard, if I tell what was trusted to me in good faith; but it is a manly deed to sunder myself from this quarrel when I know that there is a sure looking for of vengeance; but tell Njal and his sons to beware of themselves all this summer, for that will be good counsel, and to keep many men about them."

Then she fared to Bergthorsknoll, and told Njal all this talk; and Njal thanked her, and said she had done well, "for there would be more wickedness in his falling on me than of all men else."

She fared home, but he told this to his sons.

There was a carline at Bergthorsknoll, whose name was Sae-vuna. She was wise in many things, and foresighted; but she was then very old, and Njal's sons called her an old dotard, when she talked so much, but still some things which she said came to pass. It fell one day that she took a cudgel in her hand, and went up above the house to a stack of vetches. She beat the stack of vetches with her cudgel, and wished it might never thrive, "wretch that it was!"

Skarphedinn laughed at her, and asked why she was so angry with the vetch stack.

"This stack of vetches," said the carline, "will be taken and lighted with fire when Njal my master is burnt, house and all, and Bergthora my foster-child. Take it away to the water, or burn it up as quick as you can."

"We will not do that," says Skarphedinn, "for something else will be got to light a fire with, if that were foredoomed, though this stack were not here."

The carline babbled the whole summer about the vetch-stack that it should be got indoors, but something always hindered it.

CHAPTER CXXIV. OF PORTENTS.

At Reykium on Skeid dwelt one Runolf Thorstein's son. His son's name was Hildiglum. He went out on the night of the Lord's day, when nine weeks were still to winter; he heard a great crash, so that he thought both heaven and earth shook. Then he looked into the west "airt," and he thought he saw thereabouts a ring of fiery hue, and within the ring a man on a gray horse. He passed quickly by him, and rode hard. He had a flaming firebrand in his hand, and he rode so close to him that he could see him plainly. He was as black as pitch, and he sung this song with a mighty voice—

Here I ride swift steed,
His flank flecked with rime,
Rain from his mane drips,
Horse mighty for harm:
Flames flare at each end,
Gall glows in the midst,
So fares it with Flosi's reds
As this flaming brand flies;
And so fares it with Flosi's reds
As this flaming brand flies.

Then he thought he hurled the firebrand east towards the fells before him, and such a blaze of fire leapt up to meet it that he could not see the fells for the blaze. It seemed as though that man rode east among the flames and vanished there.

After that he went to his bed, and was senseless a long time, but at last he came to himself. He bore in mind all that had happened, and told his father, but he bade him tell it to Hjallti Skeggi's son. So he went and told Hjallti, but he said he had seen "the Wolfs ride," and that comes ever before great tidings."

CHAPTER CXXV. FLOSI'S JOURNEY FROM HOME.

Flosi busked him from the east when two months were still to winter, and summoned to him all his men who had promised him help and company. Each of them had two horses and good weapons, and they all came to Swinefell, and were there that night.

Flosi made them say prayers betimes on the Lord's day, and afterwards they sat down to meat. He spoke to his household, and told them what work each was to do while he was away. After that he went to his horses.

Flosi and his men rode first west on the Sand. Flosi bade them not to ride too hard at first; but said they would do well enough at that pace, and he bade all to wait for the others if any of them had need to stop. They rode west to Woodcombe, and came to Kirkby. Flosi there bade all men to come into the church, and pray to God, and men did so.

After that they mounted their horses, and rode on the fell, and so to Fishwaters, and rode a little to the west of the lakes, and so struck down west on to the Sand. Then they left Eyjafell Jokul on their left hand, and so came down into Godaland, and so on to Markfleet, and came about nones on the second day of the week

to Threecorner ridge, and waited till mid-even. Then all had come thither save Ingialld of the Springs.

The sons of Sigfus spoke much ill of him, but Flosi bade them not blame Ingialld when he was not by, "but we will pay him for this hereafter."

CHAPTER CXXVI. OF PORTENTS AT BERGTHORSKNOLL.

Now we must take up the story, and turn to Bergthorsknoll, and say that Grim and Helgi go to Holar. They had children out at foster there, and they told their mother that they should not come home that evening. They were in Holar all the day, and there came some poor women and said they had come from far. Those brothers asked them for tidings, and they said they had no tidings to tell, "but still we might tell you one bit of news."

They asked what that might be, and bade them not hide it. They said so it should be.

"We came down out of Fleetlithe, and we saw all the sons of Sigfus riding fully armed—they made for Threecorner ridge, and were fifteen in company. We saw, too, Grani Gunnar's son and Gunnar Lambi's son, and they were five in all. They took the same road, and one may say now that the whole country-side is faring and fitting about."

"Then," said Helgi Njal's son, "Flosi must have come from the east, and they must have all gone to meet him, and we two, Grim, should be where Skarphedinn is."

Grim said so it ought to be, and they fared home.

That same evening Bergthora spoke to her household, and said, "Now shall ye choose your meat to-night, so that each may have what he likes best; for this evening is the last that I shall set meat before my household."

"That shall not be," they said.

"It will be though," she says, "and I could tell you much more if I would, but this shall be a token, that Grim and Helgi will be home ere men have eaten their full to-night; and if this turns out so, then the rest that I say will happen too."

After that she set meat on the board, and Njal said, "Wonderously now it seems to me. Methinks I see all round the room, and it seems as though the gable wall were thrown down, but the whole board and the meat on it is one gore of blood."

All thought this strange but Skarphedinn, he bade men not be downcast, nor to utter other unseemly sounds, so that men might make a story out of them.

"For it befits us surely more than other men to bear us well, and it is only what is looked for from us."

Grim and Helgi came home ere the board was cleared, and men were much struck at that. Njal asked why they had returned so quickly, but they told what they had heard.

Njal bade no man go to sleep, but to beware of themselves.

CHAPTER CXXVII. THE ONSLAUGHT ON BERGTHORSKNOLL.

Now Flosi speaks to his men—

"Now we will ride to Bergthorsknoll, and come thither before supper-time."

They do so. There was a dell in the knoll, and they rode thither, and tethered their horses there, and stayed there till the evening was far spent.

Then Flosi said, "Now we will go straight up to the house, and keep close, and walk slow, and see what counsel they will take."

Njal stood out of doors, and his sons, and Kari and all the serving-men, and they stood in array to meet them in the yard, and they were near thirty of them.

Flosi halted and said—"Now we shall see what counsel they take, for it seems to me, if they stand out of doors to meet us, as though we should never get the mastery over them."

"Then is our journey bad," says Grani Gunnar's son, "if we are not to dare to fall on them."

"Nor shall that be," says Flosi; "for we will fall on them though they stand out of doors; but we shall pay that penalty, that many will not go away to tell which side won the day."

Njal said to his men, "See ye now what a great band of men they have."

"They have both a great and well-knit band," says Skarphedinn; "but this is why they make a halt now, because they think it will be a hard struggle to master us."

"That cannot be why they halt," says Njal; "and my will is that our men go indoors, for they had hard work to master Gunnar of Lithend, though he was alone to meet them; but here is a strong house as there was there, and they will be slow to come to close quarters."

"This is not to be settled in that wise," says Skarphedinn, "for those chiefs fell on Gunnar's house, who were so noble-minded, that they would rather turn back than burn him, house and all; but these will fall on us at once with fire, if they cannot get at us in any other way, for they will leave no stone unturned to get the better of us; and no doubt they think, as is not unlikely, that it will be their deaths if we escape out of their hands. Besides, I am unwilling to let myself be stifled indoors like a fox in his earth."

"Now," said Njal, "as often it happens, my sons, ye set my counsel at naught, and show me no honour, but when ye were younger ye did not so, and then your plans were better furthered."

"Let us do," said Helgi, "as our father wills; that will be best for us."

"I am not so sure of that," says Skarphedinn, "for now he is 'fey'; but still I may well humour my father in this, by being burnt indoors along with him, for I am not afraid of my death."

Then he said to Kari, "Let us stand by one another well, brother-in-law, so that neither parts from the other."

"That I have made up my mind to do," says Kari; "but if it should be otherwise doomed,—well! then it must be as it must be, and I shall not be able to fight against it."

"Avenge us, and we will avenge thee," says Skarphedinn, "if we live after thee."

Kari said so it should be.

Then they all went in, and stood in array at the door.

"Now are they all 'fey,'" said Flosi, "since they have gone indoors, and we will go right up to them as quickly as we can, and throng as close as we can before the door, and give heed that none of them, neither Kari nor Njal's sons, get away; for that were our bane."

So Flosi and his men came up to the house, and set men to watch round the house, if there were any secret doors in it. But Flosi went up to the front of the house with his men.

Then Hroald Auzur's son ran up to where Skarphedinn stood, and thrust at him. Skarphedinn hewed the spearhead off the shaft as he held it, and made another stroke at him, and the axe fell on the top of the shield, and dashed back the whole shield on Hroald's body, but the upper horn of the axe caught him on the brow, and he fell at full length on his back, and was dead at once.

"Little chance had that one with thee, Skarphedinn," said Kari, "and thou art our boldest."

"I'm not so sure of that," says Skarphedinn, and he drew up his lips and smiled.

Kari, and Grim, and Helgi, threw out many spears, and wounded many men; but Flosi and his men could do nothing.

At last Flosi said, "We have already gotten great manscathe in our men; many are wounded, and he slain whom we would choose last of all. It is now clear that we shall never master them with weapons; many now there be who are not so forward in fight as they boasted, and yet they were those who goaded us on most. I say this most to Grani Gunnar's son, and Gunnar Lambi's son, who were the least willing to spare their foes. But still we shall have to take to some other plan for ourselves, and now there are but two choices left, and neither of them good. One is to turn away, and that is our death; the other, to set fire to the house, and burn them inside it; and that is a deed which we shall have to answer for heavily before God, since we are Christian men ourselves; but still we must take to that counsel."

CHAPTER CXXVIII. NJAL'S BURNING.

Now they took fire, and made a great pile before the doors. Then Skarphedinn said.

"What, lads! are ye lighting a fire, or are ye taking to cooking?"

"So it shall be," answered Grani Gunnar's son; "and thou shalt not need to be better done."

"Thou repayest me," said Skarphedinn, "as one may look for from the man that thou art. I avenged thy father, and thou settest most store by that duty which is farthest from thee."

Then the women threw whey on the fire, and quenched it as fast as they lit it. Some, too, brought water, or slops.

Then Kol Thorstein's son said to Flosi—

"A plan comes into my mind; I have seen a loft over the hall among the crosstrees, and we will put the fire in there, and light it with the vetch-stack that stands just above the house."

Then they took the vetch-stack and set fire to it, and they who were inside were not aware of it till the whole hall was ablaze over their heads.

Then Flosi and his men made a great pile before each of the doors, and then the women folk who were inside began to weep and to wail.

Njal spoke to them and said, "Keep up your hearts, nor utter shrieks, for this is but a passing storm, and it will be long before ye have another such; and put your faith in God, and believe that He is so merciful that He will not let us burn both in this world and the next."

Such words of comfort had he for them all, and others still more strong.

Now the whole house began to blaze. Then Njal went to the door and said—

"Is Flosi so near that he can hear my voice?"

Flosi said that he could hear it.

"Wilt thou," said Njal, "take an atonement from my sons, or allow any men to go out?"

"I will not," answers Flosi, "take any atonement from thy sons, and now our dealings shall come to an end once for all, and I will not stir from this spot till they are all dead; but I will allow the women and children and house-carles to go out."

Then Njal went into the house, and said to the folk—

"Now all those must go out to whom leave is given, and so go thou out Thorhalla Asgrim's daughter, and all the people also with thee who may."

Then Thorhalla said—

"This is another parting between me and Helgi than I thought of a while ago; but still I will egg on my father and brothers to avenge this manscathe which is wrought here."

"Go, and good go with thee," said Njal, "for thou art a brave woman."

After that she went out and much folk with her.

Then Astrid of Deepback said to Helgi Njal's son—

"Come thou out with me, and I will throw a woman's cloak over thee, and tire thy head with a kerchief."

He spoke against it at first, but at last he did so at the prayer of others.

So Astrid wrapped the kerchief round Helgi's head, but Thorhilda, Skarphedinn's wife, threw the cloak over him, and he went out between them, and then Thorgerda Njal's daughter, and Helga her sister, and many other folk went out too.

But when Helgi came out Flosi said—

"That is a tall woman and broad across the shoulders that went yonder, take her and hold her."

But when Helgi heard that, he cast away the cloak. He had got his sword under his arm, and hewed at a man, and the blow fell on his shield and cut off the point of it, and the man's leg as well. Then Flosi came up and hewed at Helgi's neck, and took off his head at a stroke.

Then Flosi went to the door and called out to Njal, and said he would speak with him and Bergthora.

Now Njal does so, and Flosi said—

"I will offer thee, master Njal, leave to go out, for it is unworthy that thou shouldst burn indoors."

"I will not go out," said Njal, "for I am an old man, and little fitted to avenge my sons, but I will not live in shame."

Then Flosi said to Bergthora—

"Come thou out, housewife, for I will for no sake burn thee indoors."

"I was given away to Njal young," said Bergthora, "and I have promised him this, that we would both share the same fate."

After that they both went back into the house.

"What counsel shall we now take?" said Bergthora.

"We will go to our bed," says Njal, "and lay us down; I have long been eager for rest."

Then she said to the boy Thord, Kari's son—

"Thee will I take out, and thou shalt not burn in here."

"Thou hast promised me this, grandmother," says the boy, "that we should never part so long as I wished to be with thee; but methinks it is much better to die with thee and Njal than to live after you."

Then she bore the boy to her bed, and Njal spoke to his steward and said—

"Now shalt thou see where we lay us down, and how I lay us out, for I mean not to stir an inch hence, whether reek or burning smart me, and so thou wilt be able to guess where to look for our bones."

He said he would do so.

There had been an ox slaughtered and the hide lay there. Njal told the steward to spread the hide over them, and he did so.

So there they lay down both of them in their bed, and put the boy between them. Then they signed themselves and the boy with the cross, and gave over their souls into God's hand, and that was the last word that men heard them utter.

Then the steward took the hide and spread it over them, and went out afterwards. Kettle of the Mark caught hold of him, and dragged him out, he asked carefully after his father-in-law Njal, but the steward told him the whole truth. Then Kettle said—

"Great grief hath been sent on us, when we have had to share such ill-luck together."

Skarphedinn saw how his father laid him down, and how he laid himself out, and then he said—

"Our father goes early to bed, and that is what was to be looked for, for he is an old man."

Then Skarphedinn, and Kari, and Grim, caught the brands as fast as they dropped down, and hurled them out at them, and so it went on a while. Then they hurled spears in at them, but they caught them all as they flew, and sent them back again.

Then Flosi bade them cease shooting, "for all feats of arms will go hard with us when we deal with them; ye may well wait till the fire overcomes them."

So they do that, and shoot no more.

Then the great beams out of the roof began to fall, and Skarphedinn said—

"Now must my father be dead, and I have neither heard groan nor cough from him."

Then they went to the end of the hall, and there had fallen down a cross-beam inside which was much burnt in the middle.

Kari spoke to Skarphedinn, and said—"Leap thou out here, and I will help thee to do so, and I will leap out after thee, and then we shall both get away if we set about it so, for hitherward blows all the smoke."

"Thou shalt leap first," said Skarphedinn; "but I will leap straightway on thy heels."

"That is not wise," says Kari, "for I can get out well enough elsewhere, though it does not come about here."

"I will not do that," says Skarphedinn; "leap thou out first, but I will leap after thee at once."

"It is bidden to every man," says Kari, "to seek to save his life while he has a choice, and I will do so now; but still this parting of ours will be in such wise that we shall never see one another more; for if I leap out of the fire, I shall have no mind to leap back into the fire to thee, and then each of us will have to fare his own way."

"It joys me, brother-in-law," says Skarphedinn, "to think that if thou gettest away thou wilt avenge me."

Then Kari took up a blazing bench in his hand, and runs up along the cross-beam, then he hurls the bench out at the roof, and it fell among those who were outside.

Then they ran away, and by that time all Kari's upper-clothing and his hair were ablaze, then he threw himself down from the roof, and so crept along with the smoke.

Then one man said who was nearest—

"Was that a man that leapt out at the roof?"

"Far from it," says another; "more likely it was Skarphedinn who hurled a firebrand at us."

After that they had no more mistrust.

Kari ran till he came to a stream, and then, he threw himself down into it, and so quenched the fire on him.

After that he ran along under shelter of the smoke into a hollow, and rested him there, and that has since been called Kari's Hollow.

CHAPTER CXXIX. SKARPHEDINN'S DEATH.

Now it is to be told of Skarphedinn that he runs out on the cross-beam straight after Kari, but when he came to where the beam was most burnt, then it broke down under him. Skarphedinn came down on his feet, and tried again the second time, and climbs up the wall with a run, then down on him came the wall-plate, and he toppled down again inside.

Then Skarphedinn said—"Now one can see what will come;" and then he went along the side wall. Gunnar Lambi's son leapt up on the wall and sees Skarphedinn; he spoke thus—

"Weepest thou now, Skarphedinn?"

"Not so," says Skarphedinn, "but true it is that the smoke makes one's eyes smart, but is it as it seems to me, dost thou laugh?"

"So it is surely," says Gunnar, "and I have never laughed since thou slewest Thrain on Markfleet."

Then Skarphedinn said—"He now is a keepsake for thee;" and with that he took out of his purse the jaw-tooth which he had hewn out of Thrain, and threw it at Gunnar, and struck him in the eye, so that it started out and lay on his cheek.

Then Gunnar fell down from the roof.

Skarphedinn then went to his brother Grim, and they held one another by the hand and trode the fire; but when they came to the middle of the hall Grim fell down dead.

Then Skarphedinn went to the end of the house, and then there was a great crash, and down fell the roof. Skarphedinn was then shut in between it and the gable, and so he could not stir a step thence.

Flosi and his band stayed by the fire until it was broad daylight; then came a man riding up to them. Flosi asked him for his name, but he said his name was Geirmund, and that he was a kinsman of the sons of Sigfus.

"Ye have done a mighty deed," he says.

"Men," says Flosi, "will call it both a mighty deed and an ill deed, but that can't be helped now."

"How many men have lost their lives here?" asks Geirmund.

"Here have died," says Flosi, "Njal and Bergthora and all their sons, Thord Kari's son, Kari Solmund's son, but besides these we cannot say for a surety, because we know not their names."

"Thou tellest him now dead," said Geirmund, "with whom we have gossiped this morning."

"Who is that?" says Flosi.

"We two," says Geirmund, "I and my neighbour Bard, met Kari Solmund's son, and Bard gave him his horse, and his hair and his upper clothes were burned off him."

"Had he any weapons?" asks Flosi.

"He had the sword 'Life-luller,'" says Geirmund, "and one edge of it was blue with fire, and Bard and I said that it must have become soft, but he answered thus, that he would harden it in the blood of the sons of Sigfus or the other Burners."

"What said he of Skarphedinn?" said Flosi.

"He said both he and Grim were alive," answers Geirmund, "when they parted; but he said that now they must be dead."

"Thou hast told us a tale," said Flosi, "which bodes us no idle peace, for that man hath now got away who comes next to Gunnar of Lithend in all things; and now, ye sons of Sigfus, and ye other

Burners, know this, that such a great blood feud, and hue and cry will be made about this burning, that it will make many a man headless, but some will lose all their goods. Now I doubt much whether any man of you, ye sons of Sigfus, will dare to stay in his house; and that is not to be wondered at; and so I will bid you all to come and stay with me in the east, and let us all share one fate."

They thanked him for his offer, and said they would be glad to take it.

Then Modolf Kettle's son sang a song.

But one prop of Njal's house liveth,
All the rest inside are burnt,
All but one,—those bounteous spenders,
Sigfus' stalwart sons wrought this;
Son of Gollnir now is glutted
Vengeance for brave Hauskuld's death,
Brisk flew fire through thy dwelling,
Bright flames blazed above thy roof.

"We shall have to boast of something else than that Njal has been burnt in his house," says Flosi, "for there is no glory in that."

Then he went up on the gable, and Glum Hildir's son, and some other men. Then Glum said, "Is Skarphedinn dead, indeed?" But the others said he must have been dead long ago.

The fire sometimes blazed up fitfully and sometimes burned low, and then they heard down in the fire beneath them that this song was sung—

Deep, I ween, ye Ogre offspring!
Devilish brood of giant birth,
Would ye groan with gloomy visage
Had the fight gone to my mind;
But my very soul it gladdens
That my friends who now boast high,
Wrought not this foul deed, their glory,
Save with footsteps filled with gore.

"Can Skarphedinn, think ye, have sung this song dead or alive?" said Grani Gunnar's son.

"I will go into no guesses about that," says Flosi.

"We will look for Skarphedinn," says Grani, "and the other men who have been here burnt inside the house."

"That shall not be," says Flosi, "it is just like such foolish men as thou art, now that men will be gathering force all over the country; and when they do come, I trow the very same man who now lingers will be so scared that he will not know which way to run; and now my counsel is that we all ride away as quickly as ever we can."

Then Flosi went hastily to his horse and all his men.

Then Flosi said to Geirmund—

"Is Ingialld, thinkest thou, at home, at the Springs?"

Geirmund said he thought he must be at home.

"There now is a man," says Flosi, "who has broken his oath with us and all good faith."

Then Flosi said to the sons of Sigfus—"What course will ye now take with Ingialld; will ye forgive him, or shall we now fall on him and slay him?"

They all answered that they would rather fall on him and slay him.

Then Flosi jumped on his horse, and all the others, and they rode away. Flosi rode first, and shaped his course for Rangriver, and up along the river bank.

Then he saw a man riding down on the other bank of the river, and he knew that there was Ingialld of the Springs. Flosi calls out to him. Ingialld halted and turned down to the river bank; and Flosi said to him—

"Thou hast broken faith with us, and hast forfeited life and goods. Here now are the sons of Sigfus, who are eager to slay thee; but methinks thou hast fallen into a strait, and I will give thee thy life if thou wilt hand over to me the right to make my own award."

"I will sooner ride to meet Kari," said Ingialld, "than grant thee the right to utter thine own award, and my answer to the sons of Sigfus is this, that I shall be no whit more afraid of them than they are of me."

"Bide thou there," says Flosi, "if thou art not a coward, for I will send thee a gift."

"I will bide of a surety," says Ingialld.

Thorstein Kolbein's son, Flosi's brother's son, rode up by his side and had a spear in his hand, he was one of the bravest of men, and the most worthy of those who were with Flosi.

Flosi snatched the spear from him, and launched it at Ingialld, and it fell on his left side, and passed through the shield just below the handle, and clove it all asunder, but the spear passed on into his thigh just above the knee-pan, and so on into the saddle-tree, and there stood fast.

Then Flosi said to Ingialld—

"Did it touch thee?"

"It touched me sure enough," says Ingialld, "but I call this a scratch and not a wound."

Then Ingialld plucked the spear out of the wound, and said to Flosi—

"Now bide thou, if thou art not a milksop."

Then he launched the spear back over the river. Flosi sees that the spear is coming straight for his middle, and then he backs his horse out of the way, but the spear flew in front of Flosi's horse, and missed him, but it struck Thorstein's middle, and down he fell at once dead off his horse.

Now Ingialld tuns for the wood, and they could not get at him.

Then Flosi said to his men—

"Now have we gotten manscathe, and now we may know, when such things befall us, into what a luckless state we have got. Now it is my counsel that we ride up to Threecorner ridge; thence we shall be able to see where men ride all over the country, for by this time they will have gathered together a great band, and they will think that we have ridden east to Fleetlithe from Threecorner ridge; and thence they will think that we are riding north up on the fell, and so east to our own country, and thither the greater part of the folk will ride after us; but some will ride the coast road east to Selialandsmull, and yet they will think there is less hope of finding us thitherward, but I will now take counsel for all of us, and my plan is to ride up into Threecorner-fell, and bide there till three suns have risen and set in heaven."

CHAPTER CXXX. OF KARI SOLMUND'S SON.

Now it is to be told of Kari Solmund's son that he fared away from that hollow in which he had rested himself until he met Bard, and those words passed between them which Geirmund had told.

Thence Kari rode to Mord, and told him the tidings, and he was greatly grieved.

Kari said there were other things more befitting a man than to weep for them dead, and bade him rather gather folk and come to Holtford.

After that he rode into Thursodale to Hjalldi Skeggi's son, and as he went along Thurso water, he sees a man riding fast behind him. Kari waited for the man, and knows that he was Ingialld of the Springs. He sees that he is very bloody about the thigh; and Kari asked Ingialld who had wounded him, and he told him.

"Where met ye two?" says Kari.

"By Rangwater side," says Ingialld, "and he threw a spear over at me."

"Didst thou aught for it?" asks Kari.

"I threw the spear back," says Ingialld, "and they said that it met a man, and he was dead at once."

"Knowest thou not," said Kari, "who the man was?"

"Methought he was like Thorstein Flosi's brother's son," says Ingialld.

"Good luck go with thy hand," says Kari.

After that they rode both together to see Hjalldi Skeggi's son, and told him the tidings. He took these deeds ill, and said there was the greatest need to ride after them and slay them all.

After that he gathered men and roused the whole country; now he and Kari and Ingialld ride with this band to meet Mord Valgard's son, and they found him at Holtford, and Mord was there waiting for them with a very great company. Then they parted the hue and cry; some fared the straight road by the east coast to Selialandsmull, but some went up to Fleetlithe, and other-some the higher road thence to Threecorner ridge, and so down into Godaland. Thence they rode north to Sand. Some too rode as far

as Fishwaters, and there turned back. Some the coast road east to Holt, and told Thorgeir the tidings, and asked whether they had not ridden by there.

"This is how it is," said Thorgeir, "though I am not a mighty chief, yet Flosi would take other counsel than to ride under my eyes, when he has slain Njal, my father's brother, and my cousins; and there is nothing left for any of you but e'en to turn back again, for ye should have hunted longer nearer home; but tell this to Kari, that he must ride hither to me and be here with me if he will; but though he will not come hither east, still I will look after his farm at Dyrrholms if he will, but tell him too that I will stand by him and ride with him to the Althing. And he shall also know this, that we brothers are the next of kin to follow up the feud, and we mean so to take up the suit, that outlawry shall follow and after that revenge, man for man, if we can bring it about; but I do not go with you now, because I know naught will come of it, and they will now be as wary as they can of themselves."

Now they ride back, and all met at Hof and talked there among themselves, and said that they had gotten disgrace since they had not found them. Mord said that was not so. Then many men were eager that they should fare to Fleetlithe, and pull down the homesteads of all those who had been at those deeds, but still they listened for Mord's utterance.

"That," he said, "would be the greatest folly." They asked why he said that.

"Because," he said, "if their houses stand, they will be sure to visit them to see their wives; and then, as time rolls on, we may hunt them down there; and now ye shall none of you doubt that I will be true to thee Kari, and to all of you, and in all counsel, for I have to answer for myself."

Hjallti bade him do as he said. Then Hjallti bade Kari to come and stay with him; he said he would ride thither first. They told him what Thorgeir had offered him, and he said he would make use of that offer afterwards, but said his heart told him it would be well if there were many such.

After that the whole band broke up.

Flosi and his men saw all these tidings from where they were on the fell; and Flosi said—

"Now we will take our horses and ride away, for now it will be some good."

The sons of Sigfus asked whether it would be worth while to get to their homes and tell the news.

"It must be Mord's meaning," says Flosi, "that ye will visit your wives; and my guess is, that his plan is to let your houses stand unsacked; but my plan is that not a man shall part from the other, but all ride east with me."

So every man took that counsel, and then they all rode east and north of the Jokul, and so on till they came to Swinefell.

Flosi sent at once men out to get in stores, so that nothing might fall short.

Flosi never spoke about the deed, but no fear was found in him, and he was at home the whole winter till Yule was over.

CHAPTER CXXXI. NJAL'S AND BERGTHORA'S BONES FOUND.

Kari bade Hjallti to go and search for Njal's bones, "for all will believe in what thou sayest and thinkest about them."

Hjallti said he would be most willing to bear Njal's bones to church; so they rode thence fifteen men. They rode east over Thurso-water, and called on men there to come with them till they had one hundred men, reckoning Njal's neighbours.

They came to Bergthorsknoll at mid-day.

Hjallti asked Kari under what part of the house Njal might be lying, but Kari showed them to the spot, and there was a great heap of ashes to dig away. There they found the hide underneath, and it was as though it were shrivelled with the fire. They raised up the hide, and lo! they were unburnt under it. All praised God for that, and thought it was a great token.

Then the boy was taken up who had lain between them, and of him a finger was burnt off which he had stretched out from under the hide.

Njal was borne out, and so was Bergthora, and then all men went to see their bodies.

Then Hjallti said—"What like look to you these bodies?"

They answered, "We will wait for thy utterance."

Then Hjallti said, "I shall speak what I say with all freedom of speech. The body of Bergthora looks as it was likely she would look, and still fair; but Njal's body and visage seem to me so bright that I have never seen any dead man's body so bright as this."

They all said they thought so too.

Then they sought for Skarphedinn, and the men of the household showed them to the spot where Flosi and his men heard the song sung, and there the roof had fallen down by the gable, and there Hjallti said that they should look. Then they did so, and found Skarphedinn's body there, and he had stood up hard by the gable-wall, and his legs were burnt off him right up to the knees, but all the rest of him was unburnt. He had bitten through his under lip, his eyes were wide open and not swollen nor starting out of his head; he had driven his axe into the gable-wall so hard that it had gone in up to the middle of the blade, and that was why it was not softened.

After that the axe was broken out of the wall, and Hjallti took up the axe, and said—

"This is a rare weapon, and few would be able to wield it."

"I see a man," said Kari, "who shall bear the axe."

"Who is that?" says Hjallti.

"Thorgeir Craggeir," says Kari, "he whom I now think to be the greatest man in all their family."

Then Skarphedinn was stripped of his clothes, for they were unburnt; he had laid his hands in a cross, and the right hand uppermost. They found marks on him; one between his shoulders and the other on his chest, and both were branded in the shape of a cross, and men thought that he must have burnt them in himself.

All men said that they thought that it was better to be near Skarphedinn dead than they weened, for no man was afraid of him.

They sought for the bones of Grim, and found them in the midst of the hall. They found, too, there, right over-against him under the side wall, Thord Freedmanson; but in the weaving-room they found Saevuna the carline, and three men more. In all they found there the bones of nine souls. Now they carried the bodies to the church, and then Hjallti rode home and Kari with him. A swelling came on Ingialld's leg, and then he fared to Hjallti, and was healed there, but still he limped ever afterwards.

Kari rode to Tongue to Asgrim Ellidagrim's son. By that time Thorhalla was come home, and she had already told the tidings. Asgrim took Kari by both hands, and bade him be there all that year. Kari said so it should be.

Asgrim asked besides all the folk who had been in the house at Bergthorsknoll to stay with him. Kari said that was well offered, and said he would take it on their behalf.

Then all the folk were flitted thither.

Thorhall Asgrim's son was so startled when he was told that his foster-father Njal was dead, and that he had been burnt in his house, that he swelled all over, and a stream of blood burst out of both his ears, and could not be staunched, and he fell into a swoon, and then it was staunched.

After that he stood up, and said he had behaved like a coward, "but I would that I might be able to avenge this which has befallen me on some of those who burnt him."

But when others said that no one would think this a shame to him, he said he could not stop the mouths of the people from talking about it.

Asgrim asked Kari what trust and help he thought he might look for from those east of the rivers. Kari said that Mord Valgard's son, and Hjallti, Skeggi's son, would yield him all the help they could, and so, too, would Thorgeir Craggeir, and all those brothers.

Asgrim said that was great strength.

"What strength shall we have from thee?" says Kari.

"All that I can give," says Asgrim, "and I will lay down my life on it."

"So do," says Kari.

"I have also," says Asgrim, "brought Gizur the white into the suit, and have asked his advice how we shall set about it."

"What advice did he give?" asks Kari.

"He counselled," answers Asgrim, "'that we should hold us quite still till spring, but then ride east and set the suit on foot against Flosi for the manslaughter of Helgi, and summon the neighbours from their homes, and give due notice at the Thing of the suits for the burning, and summon the same neighbours there too on the inquest before the court. I asked Gizur who should plead the suit for manslaughter, but he said that Mord should plead it whether he liked it or not, and now,' he went on, 'it shall fall most heavily on him that up to this time all the suits he has undertaken have had the worst ending. Kari shall also be wroth whenever he meets Mord, and so, if he be made to fear on one side, and has to look to me on the other, then he will undertake the duty.'"

Then Kari said, "We will follow thy counsel as long as we can, and thou shalt lead us."

It is to be told of Kari that he could not sleep of nights. Asgrim woke up one night and heard that Kari was awake, and Asgrim said—"Is it that thou canst not sleep at night?"

Then Kari sang this song—

Bender of the bow of battle,
Sleep will not my eyelids seal,
Still my murdered messmates' bidding
Haunts my mind the livelong night;
Since the men their brands abusing
Burned last autumn guileless Njal,
Burned him house and home together,
Mindful am I of my hurt.

Kari spoke of no men so often as of Njal and Skarphedinn, and Bergthora and Helgi. He never abused his foes, and never threatened them.

CHAPTER CXXXII. FLOSI'S DREAM.

One night it so happened that Flosi struggled much in his sleep. Glum Hildir's son woke him up, and then Flosi said—

"Call me Kettle of the Mark."

Kettle came thither, and Flosi said, "I will tell thee my dream."

"I am ready to hear it," says Kettle.

"I dreamt," says Flosi, "that methought I stood below Loom-nip, and went out and looked up to the Nip, and all at once it opened, and a man came out of the Nip, and he was clad in goatskins, and had an iron staff in his hand. He called, as he walked, on many of my men, some sooner and some later, and named them by name. First he called Grim the Red my kinsman, and Arni Kol's son. Then methought something strange followed, methought he called Eyjolf Bolverk's son, and Ljot son of Hall of the Side, and some six men more. Then he held his peace awhile. After that he called five men of our band, and among them were the sons of Sigfus, thy brothers; then he called other six men, and among them were Lambi, and Modolf, and Glum. Then he called three men. Last of all he called Gunnar Lambi's son, and Kol Thorstein's son. After that he came up to me; I asked him 'what news'. He said he had tidings enough to tell. Then I asked him for his name, but he called himself Irongrim. I asked him whither he was going; he said he had to fare to the Althing. 'What shalt thou do there?' I said. 'First I shall challenge the inquest,' he answers, 'and then the courts, then clear the field for fighters.' After that he sang this song—

Soon a man death's snake-strokes dealing
High shall lift his head on earth,
Here amid the dust low rolling
Battered brainpans men shall see:
Now upon the hills in hurly
Buds the blue steel's harvest bright;
Soon the bloody dew of battle
Thigh-deep through the ranks shall rise.

"Then he shouted with such a mighty shout that methought everything near shook, and dashed down his staff, and there was a mighty crash. Then he went back into the fell, but fear clung to me; and now I wish thee to tell me what thou thinkest this dream is."

"It is my foreboding," says Kettle, "that all those who were called must be 'fey'. It seems to me good counsel that we tell this dream to no man just now."

Flosi said so it should be. Now the winter passes away till Yule was over. Then Flosi said to his men—

"Now I mean that we should fare from home, for methinks we shall not be able to have an idle peace. Now we shall fare to pray for help, and now that will come true which I told you, that we should have to bow the knee to many ere this quarrel were ended."

CHAPTER CXXXIII. OF FLOSI'S JOURNEY AND HIS ASKING FOR HELP.

After that they busked them from home all together. Flosi was in long-hose because he meant to go on foot, and then he knew that it would seem less hard to the others to walk.

Then they fared from home to Knappvale, but the evening after to Broadwater, and then to Calffell, thence by Bjornness to Hornfirth, thence to Staffell in Lon, and then to Thvattwater to Hall of the Side.

Flosi had to wife Steinvora, his daughter.

Hall gave them a very hearty welcome, and Flosi said to Hall—

"I will ask thee, father-in-law, that thou wouldst ride to the Thing with me with all thy Thingmen."

"Now," answered Hall, "it has turned out as the saw says, 'but a short while is hand fain of blow'; and yet it is one and the same man in thy band who now hangs his head, and who then goaded thee on to the worst of deeds when it was still undone. But my help I am bound to lend thee in all such places as I may."

"What counsel dost thou give me," said Flosi, "in the strait in which I now am?"

"Thou shalt fare," said Hall, "north, right up to Weaponfirth, and ask all the chiefs for aid, and thou wilt yet need it all before the Thing is over."

Flosi stayed there three nights, and rested him, and fared thence east to Geitahellna, and so to Berufirth; there they were the night. Thence they fared east to Broaddale in Haydale. There Hallbjorn the strong dwelt. He had to wife Oddny the sister of Saurli Broddhelgi's son, and Flosi had a hearty welcome there.

Hallbjorn asked how far north among the firths Flosi meant to go. He said he meant to go as far as Weaponfirth. Then Flosi took a purse of money from his belt, and said he would give it to Hallbjorn. He took the money, but yet said he had no claim on Flosi for gifts, but still I would be glad to know in what thou wilt that I repay thee.

"I have no need of money," says Flosi, "but I wish thou wouldst ride to the Thing with me, and stand by me in my quarrel, but still I have no ties or kinship to tell towards thee."

"I will grant thee that," said Hallbjorn, "to ride to the Thing with thee, and to stand by thee in thy quarrel as I would by my brother."

Flosi thanked him, and Hallbjorn asked much about the Burning, but they told him all about it at length.

Thence Flosi fared to Broaddale's heath, and so to Hrafnkelstede, there dwelt Hrafnkell, the son of Thorir, the son of Hrafnkell Raum. Flosi had a hearty welcome there, and sought for help and a promise to ride to the Thing from Hrafnkell, but he stood out a long while, though the end of it was that he gave his word that his son Thorir should ride with all their Thingmen, and yield him such help as the other priests of the same district.

Flosi thanked him and fared away to Bersastede. There Holmstein son of Bersi the wise dwelt, and he gave Flosi a very hearty welcome. Flosi begged him for help. Holmstein said he had been long in his debt for help.

Thence they fared to Waltheofstede—there Saurli Broddhelgi's son, Bjarni's brother, dwelt. He had to wife Thordisa, a daughter of Gudmund the powerful, of Modruvale. They had a hearty welcome there. But next morning Flosi raised the question with Saurli that he should ride to the Althing with him, and bid him money for it.

"I cannot tell about that," says Saurli, "so long as I do not know on which side my father-in-law Gudmund the powerful stands, for I mean to stand by him on whichever side he stands."

"Oh!" said Flosi, "I see by thy answer that a woman rules in this house."

Then Flosi stood up and bade his men take their upper clothing and weapons, and then they fared away, and got no help there. So they fared below Lagarfleet and over the heath to Njardwick; there two brothers dwelt, Thorkel the allwise, and Thorwalld his brother; they were sons of Kettle, the son of Thidrandi the wise, the son of Kettle rumble, son of Thorir Thidrandi. The mother of Thorkel the allwise and Thorwalld was Yngvillda, daughter of Thorkel the wise. Flosi got a hearty welcome there; he told those brothers plainly of his errand, and asked for their help; but they put him off until he gave three marks of silver to each of them for their aid; then they agreed to stand by Flosi.

Their mother Yngvillda was by when they gave their words to ride to the Althing, and wept. Thorkel asked why she wept; and she answered—

"I dreamt that thy brother Thorwalld was clad in a red kirtle, and methought it was so tight as though it were sewn on him; methought too that he wore red hose on his legs and feet, and bad shoethongs were twisted round them; methought it ill to see when I knew he was so uncomfortable, but I could do naught for him."

They laughed and told her she had lost her wits, and said her babble should not stand in the way of their ride to the Thing.

Flosi thanked them kindly, and fared thence to Weaponfirth and came to Hof. There dwelt Bjarni Broddhelgi's son. Bjarni took Flosi by both hands, and Flosi bade Bjarni money for his help.

"Never," says Bjarni, "have I sold my manhood or help for bribes, but now that thou art in need of help, I will do thee a good turn for friendship's sake, and ride to the Thing with thee, and stand by thee as I would by my brother."

"Then thou hast thrown a great load of debt on my hands," said Flosi, "but still I looked for as much from thee."

Thence Flosi and his men fared to Crosswick. Thorkel Geiti's son was a great friend of his. Flosi told him his errand, and Thorkel said it was but his duty to stand by him in every way in his power, and not to part from his quarrel. Thorkel gave Flosi good gifts at parting.

Thence they fared north to Weaponfirth and up into the Fleetdale country, and turned in as guests at Holmstein's, the son of Bersi the wise. Flosi told him that all had backed him in his need and business well, save Saurli Broddhelgi's son. Holmstein said the reason of that was that he was not a man of strife. Holmstein gave Flosi good gifts.

Flosi fared up Fleetdale, and thence south on the fell across Oxenlava and down Swinehorndale, and so out by Alftafirth to the west, and did not stop till he came to Thvattwater to his father-in-law Hall's house. There he stayed half a month, and his men with him and rested him.

Flosi asked Hall what counsel he would now give him, and what he should do next, and whether he should change his plans.

"My counsel," said Hall, "is this, that thou goest home to thy house, and the sons of Sigfus with thee, but that they send men to set their homesteads in order. But first of all fare home, and when ye ride to the Thing, ride all together, and do not scatter your band. Then let the sons of Sigfus go to see their wives on the way. I too will ride to the Thing, and Ljot my son with all our Thingmen, and stand by thee with such force as I can gather to me."

Flosi thanked him, and Hall gave him good gifts at parting.

Then Flosi went away from Thvattwater, and nothing is to be told of his journey till he comes home to Swinefell. There he stayed at home the rest of the winter, and all the summer right up to the Thing.

CHAPTER CXXXIV. OF THORHALL AND KARI.

Thorhall Asgrim's son, and Kari Solmund's son, rode one day to Mossfell to see Gizur the white; he took them with both hands, and there they were at his house a very long while. Once it happened as they and Gizur talked of Njal's burning, that Gizur said it was very great luck that Kari had got away. Then a song came into Kari's mouth.

I who whetted helmet-hewer,
I who oft have burnished brand.

From the fray went all unwilling
When Njal's roof-tree crackling roared;
Out I leapt when bands of spearmen
Lighted there a blaze of flame!
Listen men unto my moaning,
Mark the telling of my grief.

Then Gizur said, "It must be forgiven thee that thou art mindful, and so we will talk no more about it just now."

Kari says that he will ride home; and Gizur said "I will now make a clean breast of my counsel to thee. Thou shalt not ride home, but still thou shalt ride away, and east under Eyjafell, to see Thorgeir Craggeir, and Thorleif crow. They shall ride from the east with thee. They are the next of kin in the suit, and with them shall ride Thorgrim the big, their brother. Ye shall ride to Mord Valgard's son's house, and tell him this message from me, that he shall take up the suit for manslaughter for Helgi Njal's son against Flosi. But if he utters any words against this, then shalt thou make thyself most wrathful, and make believe as though thou wouldst let thy axe fall on his head; and in the second place, thou shalt assure him of my wrath if he shows any ill will. Along with that shalt thou say, that I will send and fetch away my daughter Thorkatla, and make her come home to me; but that he will not abide, for he loves her as the very eyes in his head."

Kari thanked him for his counsel. Kari spoke nothing of help to him, for he thought he would show himself his good friend in this as in other things.

Thence Kari rode east over the rivers, and so to Fleetlithe, and east across Markfleet, and so on to Selialandsmull. So they ride east to Holt.

Thorgeir welcomed them with the greatest kindness. He told them of Flosi's journey, and how great help he had got in the east firths.

Kari said it was no wonder that he, who had to answer for so much, should ask for help for himself.

Then Thorgeir said, "The better things go for them, the worse it shall be for them; we will only follow them up so much the harder."

Kari told Thorgeir of Gizur's advice. After that they ride from the east to Rangrivervale to Mord Valgard's son's house. He gave them a hearty welcome. Kari told him the message of Gizur his father-in-law. He was slow to take the duty on him, and said it was harder to go to law with Flosi than with any other ten men.

"Thou behavest now as he [Gizur] thought," said Kari; "for thou art a bad bargain in every way; thou art both a coward and heartless, but the end of this shall be as is fitting, that Thorkatla shall fare home to her father."

She busked her at once, and said she had long been "boun" to part from Mord. Then he changed his mood and his words quickly, and begged off their wrath, and took the suit upon him at once.

"Now," said Kari, "thou hast taken the suit upon thee, see that thou pleadest it without fear, for thy life lies on it."

Mord said he would lay his whole heart on it to do this well and manfully.

After that Mord summoned to him nine neighbours—they were all near neighbours to the spot where the deed was done. Then Mord took Thorgeir by the hand and named two witnesses to bear witness, "that Thorgeir Thorir's son hands me over a suit for manslaughter against Flosi Thord's son, to plead it for the slaying of Helgi Njal's son, with all those proofs which have to follow the suit. Thou handest over to me this suit to plead and to settle, and to enjoy all rights in it, as though I were the rightful next of kin. Thou handest it over to me by law, and I take it from thee by law."

A second time Mord named his witnesses, "to bear witness," said he, "that I give notice of an assault laid down by law against Flosi Thord's son, for that he dealt Helgi Njal's son a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death wound; and from which Helgi got his death. I give notice of this before five witnesses"—here he named them all by name—"I give this lawful notice, I give notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son has handed over to me."

Again he named witnesses to "bear witness that I give notice of a brain, of a body, or a marrow wound against Flosi Thord's son, for that wound which proved a death wound, but Helgi got his death therefrom on such and such a spot, when Flosi Thord's

son first rushed on Helgi Njal's son with an assault laid down by law. I give notice of this before five neighbours"—then he named them all by name—"I give this lawful notice. I give notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son has handed over to me."

Then Mord named his witnesses again "to bear witness," said he, "that I summon these nine neighbours who dwell nearest the spot"—here he named them all by name—"to ride to the Althing, and to sit on the inquest to find whether Flosi Thord's son rushed with an assault laid down by law on Helgi Njal's son, on that spot where Flosi Thord's son dealt Helgi Njal's son a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death wound, and from which Helgi got his death. I call on you to utter all those words which ye are bound to find by law, and which I shall call on you to utter before the court, and which belong to this suit; I call upon you by a lawful summons—I call on you so that ye may yourselves hear—I call on you in the suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son has handed over to me."

Again Mord named his witnesses, "to bear witness, that I summon these nine neighbours who dwell nearest to the spot to ride to the Althing, and to sit on an inquest to find whether Flosi Thord's son wounded Helgi Njal's son with a brain, or body, or marrow wound, which proved a death wound, and from which Helgi got his death, on that spot where Flosi Thord's son first rushed on Helgi Njal's son with an assault laid down by law. I call on you to utter all those words which ye are bound to find by law, and which I shall call on you to utter before the court, and which belong to this suit I call upon you by a lawful summons—I call on you so that ye may yourselves hear—I call on you in the suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son has handed over to me."

Then Mord said—

"Now is the suit set on foot as ye asked, and now I will pray thee, Thorgeir Craggeir, to come to me when thou ridest to the Thing, and then let us both ride together, each with our band, and keep as close as we can together, for my band shall be ready by the very beginning of the Thing, and I will be true to you in all things."

They showed themselves well pleased at that, and this was fast bound by oaths, that no man should sunder himself from another till Kari willed it, and that each of them should lay down his life for the other's life. Now they parted with friendship, and settled to meet again at the Thing.

Now Thorgeir rides back east, but Kari rides west over the rivers till he came to Tongue, to Asgrim's house. He welcomed them wonderfully well, and Kari told Asgrim all Gizur the white's plan, and of the setting on foot of the suit.

"I looked for as much from him," says Asgrim, "that he would behave well, and now he has shown it."

Then Asgrim went on—

"What heardest thou from the east of Flosi?"

"He went east all the way to Weaponfirth," answers Kari, "and nearly all the chiefs have promised to ride with him to the Althing, and to help him. They look, too, for help from the Reykdalesmen, and the men of Lightwater, and the Axefirthers."

Then they talked much about it, and so the time passes away up to the Althing.

Thorhall Asgrim's son took such a hurt in his leg that the foot above the ankle was as big and swollen as a woman's thigh, and he could not walk save with a staff. He was a man tall in growth, and strong and powerful, dark of hue in hair and skin, measured and guarded in his speech, and yet hot and hasty tempered. He was the third greatest lawyer in all Iceland.

Now the time comes that men should ride from home to the Thing, Asgrim said to Kari—

"Thou shalt ride at the very beginning of the Thing, and fit up our booths, and my son Thorhall with thee. Thou wilt treat him best and kindest, as he is footlame, but we shall stand in the greatest need of him at this Thing. With you two, twenty men more shall ride."

After that they made ready for their journey, and then they rode to the Thing, and set up their booths, and fitted them out well.

CHAPTER CXXXV. OF FLOSI AND THE BURNERS.

Flosi rode from the east and those hundred and twenty men who had been at the Burning with him. They rode till they came to Fleetlithe. Then the sons of Sigfus looked after their homesteads and tarried there that day, but at even they rode west over Thurso-water, and slept there that night. But next morning early they saddled their horses and rode off on their way.

Then Flosi said to his men—

"Now will we ride to Tongue to Asgrim to breakfast, and trample down his pride a little."

They said that were well done. They rode till they had a short way to Tongue. Asgrim stood out of doors, and some men with him. They see the band as soon as ever they could do so from the house. Then Asgrim's men said—

"There must be Thorgeir Craggeir."

"Not he," said Asgrim. "I think so all the more because these men fare with laughter and wantonness; but such kinsmen of Njal as Thorgeir is would not smile before some vengeance is taken for the Burning, and I will make another guess, and maybe ye will think that unlikely. My meaning is, that it must be Flosi and the Burners with him, and they must mean to humble us with insults, and we will now go indoors all of us."

Now they do so, and Asgrim made them sweep the house and put up the hangings, and set the boards and put meat on them. He made them place stools along each bench all down the room.

Flosi rode into the "town," and bade men alight from their horses and go in. They did so, and Flosi and his men went into the hall, Asgrim sate on the cross-bench on the dais. Flosi looked at the benches and saw that all was made ready that men needed to have. Asgrim gave them no greeting, but said to Flosi—

"The boards are set, so that meat may be free to those that need it."

Flosi sat down to the board, and all his men; but they laid their arms up against the wainscot. They sat on the stools who found no room on the benches; but four men stood with weapons just before where Flosi sat while they ate.

Asgrim kept his peace during the meat, but was as red to look on as blood.

But when they were full, some women cleared away the boards, while others brought in water to wash their hands. Flosi was in no greater hurry than if he had been at home. There lay a pole-axe in the corner of the dais. Asgrim caught it up with both hands, and ran up to the rail at the edge of the dais, and made a blow at Flosi's head. Glum Hilldir's son happened to see what he was about to do, and sprang up at once, and got hold of the axe above Asgrim's hands, and turned the edge at once on Asgrim; for Glum was very strong. Then many more men ran up and seized Asgrim, but Flosi said that no man was to do Asgrim any harm, "for we put him to too hard a trial, and he only did what he ought, and showed in that that he had a big heart."

Then Flosi said to Asgrim, "Here, now, we shall part safe and sound, and meet at the Thing, and there begin our quarrel over again."

"So it will be," says Asgrim; "and I would wish that, ere this Thing be over, ye should have to take in some of your sails."

Flosi answered him never a word, and then they went out, and mounted their horses, and rode away. They rode till they came to Laugarwater, and were there that night; but next morning they rode on to Baitvale, and baited their horses there, and there many bands rode to meet them. There was Hall of the Side, and all the Eastfirthers. Flosi greeted them well, and told them of his journeys and dealings with Asgrim. Many praised him for that, and said such things were bravely done.

Then Hall said, "I look on this in another way than ye do, for methinks it was a foolish prank; they were sure to bear in mind their griefs, even though they were not reminded of them anew; but those men who try others so heavily must look for all evil."

It was seen from Hall's way that he thought this deed far too strong. They rode thence all together, till they came to the Upper Field, and there they set their men in array, and rode down on the Thing.

Flosi had made them fit out Byrgir's booth ere he rode to the Thing; but the Eastfirthers rode to their own booths.

CHAPTER CXXXVI. OF THORGEIR CRAGGEIR.

Thorgeir Craggeir rode from the east with much people. His brothers were with him, Thorleif crow and Thorgrim the big. They came to Hof, to Mord Valgard's son's house, and bided there till he was ready. Mord had gathered every man who could bear arms, and they could see nothing about him but that he was most steadfast in everything, and now they rode until they came west across the rivers. Then they waited for Hjalalti Skeggi's son. He came after they had waited a short while, and they greeted him well, and rode afterwards all together till they came to Reykia in Bishop's-tongue, and bided there for Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and he came to meet them there. Then they rode west across Bridge-water. Then Asgrim told them all that had passed between him and Flosi; and Thorgeir said—

"I would that we might try their bravery ere the Thing closes."

They rode until they came to Baitvale. There Gizur the white came to meet them with a very great company, and they fell to talking together. Then they rode to the Upper Field, and drew up all their men in array there, and so rode to the Thing.

Flosi and his men all took to their arms, and it was within an ace that they would fall to blows. But Asgrim and his friends and their followers would have no hand in it, and rode to their booths; and now all was quiet that day, so that they had naught to do with one another. Thither were come chiefs from all the Quarters of the land; there had never been such a crowded Thing before, that men could call to mind.

CHAPTER CXXXVII. OF EYJOLF BOLVERK'S SON.

There was a man named Eyjolf. He was the son of Bolverk, the son of Eyjolf the guileful, of Otterdale. Eyjolf was a man of great rank, and best skilled in law of all men, so that some said he was the third best lawyer in Iceland. He was the fairest in face of all men, tall and strong, and there was the making of a great chief in him. He was greedy of money, like the rest of his kinsfolk.

One day Flosi went to the booth of Bjarni Broddhelgi's son. Bjarni took him by both hands, and sat Flosi down by his side. They talked about many things, and at last Flosi said to Bjarni—

"What counsel shall we now take?"

"I think," answered Bjarni, "that it is now hard to say what to do, but the wisest thing seems to me to go round and ask for help, since they are drawing strength together against you. I will also ask thee, Flosi, whether there be any very good lawyer in your band; for now there are but two courses left; one to ask if they will take an atonement, and that is not a bad choice, but the other is to defend the suit at law, if there be any defence to it, though that will seem to be a bold course; and this is why I think this last ought to be chosen, because ye have hitherto fared high and mightily, and it is unseemly now to take a lower course."

"As to thy asking about lawyers," said Flosi, "I will answer thee at once that there is no such man in our band; nor do I know where to look for one except it be Thorkel Geiti's son, thy kinsman."

"We must not reckon on him," said Bjarni, "for though he knows something of law, he is far too wary, and no man need hope to have him as his shield; but he will back thee as well as any man who backs thee best, for he has a stout heart; besides, I must tell thee that it will be that man's bane who undertakes the defence in this suit for the Burning, but I have no mind that this should befall my kinsman Thorkel, so ye must turn your eyes elsewhere."

Flosi said he knew nothing about who were the best lawyers.

"There is a man named Eyjolf," said Bjarni, "he is Bolverk's son, and he is the best lawyer in the Westfirther's Quarter; but you will need to give him much money if you are to bring him into the suit, but still we must not stop at that. We must also go with our arms to all law business, and be most wary of ourselves, but not meddle with them before we are forced to fight for our lives. And now I

will go with thee, and set out at once on our begging for help, for now methinks the peace will be kept but a little while longer."

After that they go out of the booth, and to the booths of the Axefirthers. Then Bjarni talks with Lyting and Bleing, and Hroi Arnstein's son, and he got speedily whatever he asked of them. Then they fared to see Kol, the son of Killing-Skuti, and Eyvind Thorkel's son, the son of Askel the priest, and asked them for their help; but they stood out a long while, but the end of it was that they took three marks of silver for it, and so went into the suit with them.

Then they went to the booths of the men of Lightwater, and stayed there some time. Flosi begged the men of Lightwater for help, but they were stubborn and hard to win over, and then Flosi said, with much wrath, "Ye are ill-behaved! ye are grasping and wrongful at home in your own country, and ye will not help men at the Thing, though they need it. No doubt you will be held up to reproach at the Thing, and very great blame will be laid on you if ye bare not in mind that scorn and those biting words which Skarphedinn hurled at you men of Lightwater."

But on the other hand, Flosi dealt secretly with them, and bade them money for their help, and so coaxed them over with fair words, until it came about that they promised him their aid, and then became so steadfast that they said they would fight for Flosi, if need were.

Then Bjarni said to Flosi—

"Well done! well done! Thou art a mighty chief, and a bold outspoken man, and reckest little what thou sayest to men."

After that they fared away west across the river, and so to the Hladbooth. They saw many men outside before the booth. There was one man who had a scarlet cloak over his shoulders, and a gold band round his head, and an axe studded with silver in his hand.

"This is just right," said Bjarni, "here now is the man I spoke of, Eyjolf Bolverk's son, if thou wilt see him, Flosi."

Then they went to meet Eyjolf, and hailed him. Eyjolf knew Bjarni at once, and greeted him well. Bjarni took Eyjolf by the hand, and led him up into the "Great Rift." Flosi's and Bjarni's men followed after, and Eyjolf's men went also with him. They bade them stay upon the lower brink of the Rift, and look about them, but Flosi, and Bjarni, and Eyjolf went on till they came to where the path leads down from the upper brink of the Rift.

Flosi said it was a good spot to sit down there, for they could see around them far and wide. Then they sat them down there. They were four of them together, and no more.

Then Bjarni spoke to Eyjolf, and said—

"Thee, friend, have we come to see, for we much need thy help in every way."

"Now," said Eyjolf, "there is good choice of men here at the Thing, and ye will not find it hard to fall on those who will be a much greater strength to you than I can be."

"Not so," said Bjarni, "Thou hast many things which show that there is no greater man than thou at the Thing; first of all, that thou art so well-born, as all those men are who are sprung from Ragnar hairybreks; thy forefathers, too, have always stood first in great suits, both here at the Thing, and at home in their own country, and they have always had the best of it; we think, therefore, it is likely that thou wilt be lucky in winning suits, like thy kinsfolk."

"Thou speakest well, Bjarni," said Eyjolf; "but I think that I have small share in all this that thou sayest."

Then Flosi said—

"There is no need beating about the bush as to what we have in mind. We wish to ask for thy help, Eyjolf, and that thou wilt stand by us in our suits, and go to the court with us, and undertake the defence, if there be any, and plead it for us, and stand by us in all things that may happen at this Thing."

Eyjolf jumped up in wrath, and said that no man had any right to think that he could make a catpaw of him, or drag him on if he had no mind to go himself.

"I see, too, now," he says, "what has led you to utter all those fair words with which ye began to speak to me."

Then Hallbjorn the strong caught hold of him and sate him down by his side, between him and Bjarni, and said—

"No tree falls at the first stroke, friend, but sit here awhile by us."

Then Flosi drew a gold ring off his arm.

"This ring will I give thee, Eyjolf, for thy help and friendship, and so show thee that I will not befool thee. It will be best for thee to take the ring, for there is no man here at the Thing to whom I have ever given such a gift."

The ring was such a good one, and so well made, that it was worth twelve hundred yards of russet stuff.

Hallbjorn drew the ring on Eyjolf's arm; and Eyjolf said—

"It is now most fitting that I should take the ring, since thou behavest so handsomely; and now thou mayest make up thy mind that I will undertake the defence, and do all things needful."

"Now," said Bjarni, "ye behave handsomely on both sides, and here are men well fitting to be witnesses, since I and Hallbjorn are here, that thou hast undertaken the suit."

Then Eyjolf arose, and Flosi too, and they took one another by the hand; and so Eyjolf undertook the whole defence of the suit off Flosi's hands, and so, too, if any suit arose out of the defence, for it often happens that what is a defence in one suit, is a plaintiff's plea in another. So he took upon him all the proofs and proceedings which belonged to those suits, whether they were to be pleaded before the Quarter Court or the Fifth Court. Flosi handed them over in lawful form, and Eyjolf took them in lawful form, and then he said to Flosi and Bjarni.

"Now I have undertaken this defence just as ye asked, but my wish it is that ye should still keep it secret at first; but if the matter comes into the Fifth Court, then be most careful not to say that ye have given goods for my help."

Then Flosi went home to his booth, and Bjarni with him, but Eyjolf went to the booth of Snorri the priest, and sate down by him, and they talked much together.

Snorri the priest caught hold of Eyjolf's arm, and turned up the sleeve, and sees that he had a great ring of gold on his arm. Then Snorri the priest said—

"Pray, was this ring bought or given?"

Eyjolf was put out about it, and had never a word to say. Then Snorri said—

"I see plainly that thou must have taken it as a gift, and may this ring not be thy death!"

Eyjolf jumped up and went away, and would not speak about it; and Snorri said, as Eyjolf arose—

"It is very likely that thou wilt know what kind of gift thou hast taken by the time this Thing is ended."

Then Eyjolf went to his booth.

CHAPTER CXXXVIII. OF ASGRIM, AND GIZUR, AND KARI.

Now Asgrim Ellidagrim's son talks to Gizur the white, and Kari Solmund's son, and to Hjalalti Skeggi's son, Mord Valgard's son, and Thorgeir Craggeir, and says—

"There is no need to have any secrets here, for only those men are by who know all our counsel. Now I will ask you if ye know anything of their plans, for if you do, it seems to me that we must take fresh counsel about our own plans."

"Snorri the priest," answers Gizur the white, "sent a man to me, and bade him tell me that Flosi had gotten great help from the Northlanders; but that Eyjolf Bolverk's son, his kinsman, had had a gold ring given him by some one, and made a secret of it, and Snorri said it was his meaning that Eyjolf Bolverk's son must be meant to defend the suit at law, and that the ring must have been given him for that."

They were all agreed that it must be so. Then Gizur spoke to them—

"Now has Mord Valgard's son, my son-in-law, undertaken a suit, which all must think most hard, to prosecute Flosi; and now my wish is that ye share the other suits amongst you, for now it will soon be time to give notice of the suits at the Hill of Laws. We shall need also to ask for more help."

Asgrim said so it should be, "but we will beg thee to go round with us when we ask for help." Gizur said he would be ready to do that.

After that Gizur picked out all the wisest men of their company to go with him as his backers. There was Hjalalti Skeggi's son, and Asgrim, and Kari, and Thorgeir Craggeir.

Then Gizur the white said—

"Now will we first go to the booth of Skapti Thorod's son," and they do so. Gizur the white went first, then Hjalalti, then Kari, then Asgrim, then Thorgeir Craggeir, and then his brothers.

They went into the booth. Skapti sat on the cross-bench on the dais, and when he saw Gizur the white he rose up to meet him, and greeted him and all of them well, and bade Gizur to sit down by him, and he does so. Then Gizur said to Asgrim—

"Now shalt thou first raise the question of help with Skapti, but I will throw in what I think good."

"We are come hither," said Asgrim, "for this sake, Skapti, to seek help and aid at thy hand."

"I was thought to be hard to win the last time," said Skapti, "when I would not take the burden of your trouble on me."

"It is quite another matter now," said Gizur. "Now the feud is for master Njal and mistress Bergthora, who were burnt in their own house without a cause, and for Njal's three sons, and many other worthy men, and thou wilt surely never be willing to yield no help to men, or to stand by thy kinsmen and connections."

"It was in my mind," answers Skapti, "when Skarphedinn told me that I had myself borne tar on my own head, and cut up a sod of turf and crept under it, and when he said that I had been so afraid that Thorolf Lopt's son of Eyrar bore me abroad in his ship among his meal-sacks, and so carried me to Iceland, that I would never share in the blood feud for his death."

"Now there is no need to bear such things in mind," said Gizur the white, "for he is dead who said that, and thou wilt surely grant me this, though thou wouldst not do it for other men's sake."

"This quarrel," says Skapti, "is no business of thine, except thou choosest to be entangled in it along with them."

Then Gizur was very wrath, and said—

"Thou art unlike thy father, though he was thought not to be quite clean-handed; yet was he ever helpful to men when they needed him most."

"We are unlike in temper," said Skapti. "Ye two, Asgrim and thou, think that ye have had the lead in mighty deeds; thou, Gizur the white, because thou overcamest Gunnar of Lithend; but Asgrim, for that he slew Gauk, his foster-brother."

"Few," said Asgrim, "bring forward the better if they know the worse, but many would say that I slew not Gauk ere I was driven to it. There is some excuse for thee for not helping us, but none for heaping reproaches on us; and I only wish before this Thing is out that thou mayest get from this suit the greatest disgrace, and that there may be none to make thy shame good."

Then Gizur and his men stood up all of them, and went out, and so on to the booth of Snorri the priest.

Snorri sat on the cross-bench in his booth; they went into the booth, and he knew the men at once, and stood up to meet them, and bade them all welcome, and made room for them to sit by him.

After that, they asked one another the news of the day.

Then Asgrim spoke to Snorri, and said—

"For that am I and my kinsman Gizur come hither, to ask thee for thy help."

"Thou speakest of what thou mayest always be forgiven for asking, for help in the blood-feud after such connections as thou hadst. We, too, got many wholesome counsels from Njal, though few now bear that in mind; but as yet I know not of what ye think ye stand most in need."

"We stand most in need," answers Asgrim, "of brisk lads and good weapons, if we fight them here at the Thing."

"True it is," said Snorri, "that much lies on that, and it is likeliest that ye will press them home with daring, and that they will defend themselves so in likewise, and neither of you will allow the other's right. Then ye will not bear with them and fall on them, and that will be the only way left; for then they will seek to pay you off with shame for manscathe, and with dishonour for loss of kin."

It was easy to see that he goaded them on in everything.

Then Gizur the white said—

"Thou speakest well, Snorri, and thou behavest ever most like a chief when most lies at stake."

"I wish to know," said Asgrim, "in what way thou wilt stand by us if things turn out as thou sayest."

"I will show thee those marks of friendship," said Snorri, "on which all your honour will hang, but I will not go with you to the court. But if ye fight here on the Thing, do not fall on them at all unless ye are all most steadfast and dauntless, for you have great champions against you. But if ye are over-matched, ye must let yourselves be driven hither towards us, for I shall then have drawn up my men in array hereabouts, and shall be ready to stand by you. But if it falls out otherwise, and they give way before you, my meaning is that they will try to run for a stronghold in the 'Great Rift'. But if they come thither, then ye will never get the better of them. Now I will take that on my hands, to draw up my men there, and guard the pass to the stronghold, but we will not follow them whether they turn north or south along the river. And when you have slain out of their band about as many as I think ye will be able to pay blood-fines for, and yet keep your priesthods and abodes, then I will run up with all my men and part you. Then ye shall promise to do us I bid you, and stop the battle, if I on my part do what I have now promised."

Gizur thanked him kindly, and said that what he had said was just what they all needed, and then they all went out.

"Whither shall we go now?" said Gizur.

"To the Northlanders' booth," said Asgrim.
Then they fared thither.

CHAPTER CXXXIX. OF ASGRIM AND GUDMUND.

And when they came into the booth then they saw where Gudmund the powerful sate and talked with Einer Conal's son, his foster-child; he was a wise man.

Then they come before him, and Gudmund welcomed them very heartily, and made them clear the booth for them, that they might all be able to sit down.

Then they asked what tidings, and Asgrim said—

"There is no need to mutter what I have to say. We wish, Gudmund, to ask for thy steadfast help."

"Have ye seen any other chiefs before?" said Gudmund.

They said they had been to see Skapti Thorod's son and Snorri the priest, and told him quietly how they had fared with each of them.

Then Gudmund said—

"Last time I behaved badly and meanly to you. Then I was stubborn, but now ye shall drive your bargain with me all the more quickly because I was more stubborn then, and now I will go myself with you to the court with all my Thingmen, and stand by you in all such things as I can, and fight for you though this be needed, and lay down my life for your lives. I will also pay Skapti out in this way, that Thorstein gapemouth his son shall be in the battle on our side, for he will not dare to do aught else than I will, since he has Jodisa my daughter to wife, and then Skapti will try to part us."

They thanked him, and talked with him long and low afterwards, so that no other men could hear.

Then Gudmund bade them not to go before the knees of any other chiefs, for he said that would be little-hearted.

"We will now run the risk with the force that we have. Ye must go with your weapons to all law-business, but not fight as things stand."

Then they went all of them home to their booths, and all this was at first with few men's knowledge.

So now the Thing goes on.

CHAPTER CXL. OF THE DECLARATIONS OF THE SUITS.

It was one day that men went to the Hill of Laws, and the chiefs were so placed that Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and Gizur the white, and Gudmund the powerful, and Snorri the priest, were on the

upper hand by the Hill of Laws; but the Eastfirthers stood down below.

Mord Valgard's son stood next to Gizur his father-in-law; he was of all men the readiest-tongued.

Gizur told him that he ought to give notice of the suit for manslaughter, and bade him speak up, so that all might hear him well.

Then Mord took witness and said—"I take witness to this that I give notice of an assault laid down by law against Flosi Thord's son, for that he rushed at Helgi Njal's son and dealt him a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death-wound, and from which Helgi got his death. I say that in this suit he ought to be made a guilty man, an outlaw, not to be fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured in any need. I say that all his goods are forfeited, half to me, and half to the men of the Quarter, who have a right by law to take his forfeited goods. I give notice of this suit for manslaughter in the Quarter Court into which this suit ought by law to come. I give notice of this lawful notice; I give notice in the hearing of all men on the Hill of Laws; I give notice of this suit to be pleaded this summer, and of full outlawry against Flosi Thord's son; I give notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son has handed over to me."

Then a great shout was uttered at the Hill of Laws, that Mord spoke well and boldly.

Then Mord begun to speak a second time.

"I take you to witness to this," says he, "that I give notice of a suit against Flosi Thord's son, I give notice for that he wounded Helgi Njal's son with a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death-wound, and from which Helgi got his death on that spot where Flosi Thord's son had first rushed on Helgi Njal's son with an assault laid down by law. I say that thou, Flosi, ought to be made in this suit a guilty man, an outlaw, not to be fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured in any need. I say that all thy goods are forfeited, half to me and half to the men of the Quarter, who have a right by law to take the goods which have been forfeited by thee. I give notice of this suit in the Quarter Court into which it ought by law to come; I give notice of this lawful notice; I give notice of it in the hearing of all men on the Hill of Laws; I give notice of this suit to be pleaded this summer, and of full outlawry against Flosi Thord's son, I give notice of the suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son hath handed over to me."

After that Mord sat him down.

Flosi listened carefully, but said never a word the while.

Then Thorgeir Craggeir stood up and took witness, and said—"I take witness to this, that I give notice of a suit against Glum Hildir's son, in that he took firing and lit it, and bore it to the house at Bergthorskknoll, when they were burned inside it, to wit, Njal Thorgeir's son, and Berghthora Skarphedinn's daughter, and all those other men who were burned inside it there and then. I say that in this suit he ought to be made a guilty man, an outlaw, not to be fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured in any need. I say that all his goods are forfeited, half to me, and half to the men of the Quarter, who have a right by law to take his forfeited goods; I give notice of this suit in the Quarter Court into which it ought by law to come. I give notice in the hearing of all men on the Hill of Laws. I give notice of this suit to be pleaded this summer, and of full outlawry against Glum Hildir's son."

Kari Solmund's son declared his suits against Kol Thorstein's son, and Gunnar Lambi's son, and Grani Gunnar's son, and it was the common talk of men that he spoke wondrous well.

Thorleif crow declared his suit against all the sons of Sigfus, but Thorgrim the big, his brother, against Modolf Kettle's son, and Lambi Sigurd's son, and Hroar Hamond's son, brother of Leidolf the strong.

Asgrim Ellidagrim's son declared his suit against Leidolf and Thorstein Geirleif's son. Arni Kol's son, and Grim the red.

And they all spoke well.

After that other men gave notice of their suits, and it was far on in the day that it went on so.

Then men fared home to their booths.

Eyjolf Bolverk's son went to his booth with Flosi; they passed east around the booth, and Flosi said to Eyjolf—

"See'st thou any defence in these suits?"

"None," says Eyjolf.

"What counsel is now to be taken?" says Flosi.

"I will give thee a piece of advice," said Eyjolf. "Now thou shalt hand over thy priesthood to thy brother Thorgeir, but declare that thou hast joined the Thing of Askel the priest the son of Thorkettle, north away in Reykiardale; but if they do not know this, then may be that this will harm them, for they will be sure to plead their suit in the Eastfirther's court, but they ought to plead it in the Northlanders' court, and they will overlook that, and it is a Fifth Court matter against them if they plead their suit in another court than that in which they ought, and then we will take that suit up, but not until we have no other choice left."

"May be," said Flosi, "that we shall get the worth of the ring."

"I don't know that," says Eyjolf; "but I will stand by thee at law, so that men shall say that there never was a better defence. Now, we must send for Askel, but Thorgeir shall come to thee at once, and a man with him."

A little while after Thorgeir came, and then he took on him Flosi's leadership and priesthood.

By that time Askel was come thither too, and then Flosi declared that he had joined his Thing, and this was with no man's knowledge save theirs.

Now all is quiet till the day when the courts were to go out to try suits.

CHAPTER CXLI. NOW MEN GO TO THE COURTS.

Now the time passes away till the courts were to go out to try suits. Both sides then made them ready to go thither, and armed them. Each side put war-tokens on their helmets.

Then Thorhall Asgrim's son said—

"Walk hastily in nothing, father mine, and do everything as lawfully and rightly as ye can, but if ye fall into any strait let me know as quickly as ye can, and then I will give you counsel."

Asgrim and the others looked at him, and his face was as though it were all blood, but great teardrops gushed out of his eyes. He bade them bring him his spear, that had been a gift to him from Skarphedinn, and it was the greatest treasure.

Asgrim said as they went away—

"Our kinsman Thorhall was not easy in his mind as we left him behind in the booth, and I know not what he will be at."

Then Asgrim said again—

"Now we will go to Mord Valgard's son, and think of naught else but the suit, for there is more sport in Flosi than in very many other men."

Then Asgrim sent a man to Gizur the white, and Hjalalti Skeggi's son, and Gudmund the powerful. Now they all came together, and went straight to the court of Eastfirthers. They went to the court from the south, but Flosi and all the Eastfirthers with him went to it from the north. There were also the men of Reykdale and the Axefirthers with Flosi. There, too, was Eyjolf Bolverk's son. Flosi looked at Eyjolf, and said—

"All now goes fairly, and may be that it will not be far off from thy guess."

"Keep thy peace about it," says Eyjolf, "and then we shall be sure to gain our point."

Now Mord took witness, and bade all those men who had suits of outlawry before the court to cast lots who should first plead or declare his suit, and who next, and who last; he bade them by a lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges heard it. Then lots were cast as to the declarations, and he, Mord, drew the lot to declare his suit first.

Now Mord Valgard's son took witness the second time, and said—

"I take witness to this, that I except all mistakes in words in my pleading, whether they be too many or wrongly spoken, and I claim the right to amend all my words until I have put them into proper lawful shape. I take witness to myself of this."

Again Mord said—

"I take witness to this, that I bid Flosi Thord's son, or any other man who has undertaken the defence made over to him by Flosi, to listen for him to my oath, and to my declaration of my suit, and to

all the proofs and proceedings which I am about to bring forward against him; I bid him by a lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges may hear it across the court."

Again Mord Valgard's son said—

"I take witness to this, that I take an oath on the book, a lawful until, and I say it before God, that I will so plead this suit in the most truthful, and most just, and most lawful way, so far as I know; and that I will bring forward all my proofs in due form, and utter them faithfully so long as I am in this suit."

After that he spoke in these words—

"I have called Thorodd as my first witness, and Thorbjorn as my second; I have called them to bear witness that I gave notice of an assault laid down by law against Flosi Thord's son, on that spot where he, Flosi Thord's son, rushed with an assault laid down by law on Helgi Njal's son, when Flosi Thord's son, wounded Helgi Njal's son with a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death-wound, and from which Helgi got his death. I said that he ought to be made in this suit a guilty man, an outlaw, not to be fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured in any need; I said that all his goods were forfeited, half to me and half to the men of the Quarter who have the right by law to take the goods which he has forfeited; I gave notice of the suit in the Quarter Court into which the suit ought by law to come; I gave notice of that lawful notice; I gave notice in the hearing of all men at the Hill of Laws; I gave notice of this suit to be pleaded now this summer, and of full outlawry against Flosi Thord's son. I gave notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son had handed heard it. Then lots were cast as to the declarations, and he, Mord, drew the lot to declare his suit first."

Now Mord Valgard's son took witness the second time, and said—

"I take witness to this, that I except all mistakes in words in my pleading, whether they be too many or wrongly spoken, and I claim the right to amend all my words until I have put them into proper lawful shape. I take witness to myself of this."

Again Mord said—

"I take witness to this, that I bid Flosi Thord's son, or any other man who has undertaken the defence made over to him by Flosi, to listen for him to my oath, and to my declaration of my suit, and to all the proofs and proceedings which I am about to bring forward against him; I bid him by a lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges may hear it across the court."

Again Mord Valgard's son said—

"I take witness to this, that I take an oath on the book, a lawful oath, and I say it before God, that I will so plead this suit in the most truthful, and most just, and most lawful way, so far as I know; and that I will bring forward all my proofs in due form, and utter them faithfully so long as I am in this suit."

After that he spoke in these words—

"I have called Thorodd as my first witness, and Thorbjorn as my second; I have called them to bear witness that I gave notice of an assault laid down by law against Flosi Thord's son, on that spot where he, Flosi Thord's son, rushed with an assault laid down by law on Helgi Njal's son, when Flosi Thord's son, wounded Helgi Njal's son with a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death-wound, and from which Helgi got his death. I said that he ought to be made in this suit a guilty man, an outlaw, not to be fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured in any need; I said that all his goods were forfeited, half to me and half to the men of the Quarter who have the right by law to take the goods which he has forfeited; I gave notice of the suit in the Quarter Court into which the suit ought by law to come; I gave notice of that lawful notice; I gave notice in the hearing of all men at the Hill of Laws; I gave notice of this suit to be pleaded now this summer, and of full outlawry against Flosi Thord's son. I gave notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son had handed over to me; and I had all these words in my notice which I have now used in this declaration of my suit. I now declare this suit of outlawry in this shape before the court of the Eastfirthers over the head of John, as I uttered it when I gave notice of it."

Then Mord spoke again—

"I have called Thorodd as my first witness, and Thorbjorn as my second. I have called them to bear witness that I gave notice

of a suit against Flosi Thord's son for that he wounded Helgi Njal's son with a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death-wound, and from which Helgi got his death. I said that he ought to be made in this suit a guilty man, an outlaw, not he fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured in any need; I said that all his goods were forfeited, half to me and half to the men of the Quarter who have the right by law to take the goods which he has forfeited; I gave notice of the suit in the Quarter Court into which the suit ought by law to come; I gave notice of that lawful notice; I gave notice in the hearing of all men at the Hill of Laws; I gave notice of this suit to be pleaded now this summer, and of full outlawry against Flosi Thord's son. I gave notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son had handed over to me; and I had all these words in my notice which I have now used in this declaration of my suit. I now declare this suit of outlawry in this shape before the court of the Eastfirthers over the head of John, as I uttered it when I gave notice of it."

Then Mord's witnesses to the notice came before the court, and spake so that one uttered their witness, but both confirmed it by their common consent in this form, "I bear witness that Mord called Thorodd as his first witness, and me as his second, and my name is Thorbjorn"—then he named his father's name—"Mord called us two as his witnesses that he gave notice of an assault laid down by law against Flosi Thord's son when he rushed on Helgi Njal's son, in that spot where Flosi Thord's son dealt Helgi Njal's son a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, that proved a death-wound, and from which Helgi got his death. He said that Flosi ought to be made in this suit a guilty man, an outlaw, not to be fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured by any man; he said that all his goods were forfeited, half to himself and half to the men of the Quarter who have the right by law to take the goods which he had forfeited; he gave notice of the suit in the Quarter Court into which the suit ought by law to come; he gave notice of that lawful notice; he gave notice in the hearing of all men at the Hill of Laws; he gave notice of this suit to be pleaded now this summer, and of full outlawry against Flosi Thord's son. He gave notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son had handed over to him. He used all those words in his notice which he used in the declaration of his suit, and which we have used in bearing witness; we have now borne our witness rightly and lawfully, and we are agreed in bearing it; we bear this witness in this shape before the Eastfirthers' Court over the head of John, as Mord uttered it when he gave his notice."

A second time they bore their witness of the notice before the court, and put the wounds first and the assault last, and used all the same words as before, and bore their witness in this shape before the Eastfirthers' Court just as Mord uttered them when he gave his notice.

Then Mord's witnesses to the handing over of the suit went before the court, and one uttered their witness, and both confirmed it by common consent, and spoke in these words—"That those two, Mord Valgard's son and Thorgeir Thorir's son, took them to witness that Thorgeir Thorir's son handed over a suit for manslaughter to Mord Valgard's son against Flosi Thord's son for the laying of Helgi Njal's son; he handed over to him then the suit, with all the proofs and proceedings which belonged to the suit, he handed it over to him to plead and to settle, and to make use of all rights as though he were the rightful next of kin; Thorgeir handed it over lawfully, and Mord took it lawfully."

They bore this witness of the handing over of the suit in this shape before the Eastfirthers' Court over the head of John, just as Mord or Thorgeir had called them as witnesses to prove.

They made all these witnesses swear an oath ere they bore witness, and the judges too.

Again Mord Valgard's son took witness.

"I take witness to this," said he, "that I bid those nine neighbours whom I summoned when I laid this suit against Flosi Thord's son, to take their seats west on the river-bank, and I call on the defendant to challenge this inquest, I call on him by a lawful bidding before the court so that the judges may hear."

Again Mord took witness.

"I take witness to this, that I bid Flosi Thord's son, or that other man who has the defence handed over to him, to challenge the

inquest which I have caused to take their seats west on the river-bank. I bid thee by a lawful bidding before the court so that the judges may hear."

Again Mord took witness.

"I take witness to this, that now are all the first steps and proofs brought forward which belong to the suit. Summons to hear my oath, oath taken, suit declared, witness borne to the notice, witness borne to the handing over of the suit, the neighbours on the inquest bidden to take their seats, and the defendant bidden to challenge the inquest. I take this witness to these steps and proofs which are now brought forward, and also to this that I shall not be thought to have left the suit though I go away from the court to look up proofs, or on other business."

Now Flosi and his men went thither where the neighbours on the inquest sate.

Then Flosi said to his men—

"The sons of Sigfus must know best whether these are the rightful neighbours to the spot who are here summoned."

Kettle of the Mark answered—

"Here is that neighbour who held Mord at the font when he was baptised, but another is his second cousin by kinship."

Then they reckoned up his kinship, and proved it with an oath.

Then Eyjolf took witness that the inquest should do nothing till it was challenged.

A second time Eyjolf took witness—

"I take witness to this," said he, "that I challenge both these men out of the inquest, and set them aside"—here he named them by name, and their fathers as well—"for this sake, that one of them is Mord's second cousin by kinship, but the other for gossipry, for which sake it is lawful to challenge a neighbour on the inquest; ye two are for a lawful reason incapable of uttering a finding, for now a lawful challenge has overtaken you, therefore I challenge and set you aside by the rightful custom of pleading at the Althing, and by the law of the land; I challenge you in the cause which Flosi Thord's son has handed over to me."

Now all the people spoke out, and said that Mord's suit had come to naught, and all were agreed in this that the defence was better than the prosecution.

Then Asgrim said to Mord—

"The day is not yet their own, though they think now that they have gained a great step; but now some one shall go to see Thorhall my son, and know what advice he gives us."

Then a trusty messenger was sent to Thorhall, and told him as plainly as he could how far the suit had gone, and how Flosi and his men thought they had brought the finding of the inquest to a dead lock.

"I will so make it out," says Thorhall, "that this shall not cause you to lose the suit; and tell them not to believe it, though quirks and quibbles be brought against them, for that wiseacre Eyjolf has now overlooked something. But now thou shalt go back as quickly as thou canst, and say that Mord Valgard's son must go before the court, and take witness that their challenge has come to naught," and then he told him step by step how they must proceed.

The messenger came and told them Thorhall's advice.

Then Mord Valgard's son went to the court and took witness. "I take witness to this," said he, "that I make Eyjolf's challenge void and of none effect; and my ground is, that he challenged them not for their kinship to the true plaintiff, the next of kin, but for their kinship to him who pleaded the suit; I take this witness to myself, and to all those to whom this witness will be of use."

After that he brought that witness before the court.

Now he went whither the neighbours sate on the inquest, and bade those to sit down again who had risen up, and said they were rightly called on to share in the finding of the inquest.

Then all said that Thorhall had done great things, and all thought the prosecution better than the defence.

Then Flosi said to Eyjolf—"Thinkest thou that this is good law?"

"I think so, surely," he says, "and beyond a doubt we overlooked this; but still we will have another trial of strength with them."

Then Eyjolf took witness. "I take witness to this," said he, "that I challenge these two men out of the inquest"—here he named them both—"for that sake that they are lodgers, but not householders; I do not allow you two to sit on the inquest, for now a lawful

challenge has overtaken you; I challenge you both and set you aside out of the inquest, by the rightful custom of the Althing and by the law of the land."

Now Eyjolf said he was much mistaken if that could be shaken; and then all said that the defence was better than the prosecution.

Now all men praised Eyjolf, and said there was never a man who could cope with him in lawcraft.

Mord Valgard's son and Asgrim Ellidagrim's son now sent a man to Thorhall to tell him how things stood; but when Thorhall heard that, he asked what goods they owned, or if they were paupers?

The messenger said that one gained his livelihood by keeping milch-kine, and "he has both cows and ewes at his abode; but the other has a third of the land which he and the freeholder farm, and finds his own food; and they have one hearth between them, he and the man who lets the land, and one shepherd."

Then Thorhall said—

"They will fare now as before, for they must have made a mistake, and I will soon upset their challenge, and this though Eyjolf had used such big words that it was law."

Now Thorhall told the messenger plainly, step by step, how they must proceed; and the messenger came back and told Mord and Asgrim all the counsel that Thorhall had given.

Then Mord went to the court and took witness, "I take witness to this, that I bring to naught Eyjolf Bolverk's son's challenge, for that he has challenged those men out of the inquest who have a lawful right to lie there; every man has a right to sit on an inquest of neighbours, who owns three hundreds in land or more, though he may have no dairy-stock; and he too has the same right who lives by dairy-stock worth the same sum, though he leases no land."

Then he brought this witness before the court, and then he went whither the neighbours on the inquest were, and bade them sit down, and said they were rightfully among the inquest.

Then there was a great shout and cry, and then all men said that Flosi's and Eyjolf's cause was much shaken, and now men were of one mind as to this, that the prosecution was better than the defence.

Then Flosi said to Eyjolf—

"Can this be law?"

Eyjolf said he had not wisdom enough to know that for a surety, and then they sent a man to Skapti, the Speaker of the Law, to ask whether it were good law, and he sent them back word that it was surely good law, though few knew it.

Then this was told to Flosi, and Eyjolf Bolverk's son asked the sons of Sigfus as to the other neighbours who were summoned thither.

They said there were four of them who were wrongly summoned; "for those sit now at home who were nearer neighbours to the spot."

Then Eyjolf took witness that he challenged all those four men out of the inquest, and that he did it with lawful form of challenge. After that he said to the neighbours—

"Ye are bound to render lawful justice to both sides, and now ye shall go before the court when ye are called, and take witness that ye find that bar to uttering your finding; that ye are but five summoned to utter your finding, but that ye ought to be nine; and now Thorhall may prove and carry his point in every suit, if he can cure this flaw in this suit."

And now it was plain in everything that Flosi and Eyjolf were very boastful; and there was a great cry that now the suit for the Burning was quashed, and that again the defence was better than the prosecution.

Then Asgrim spoke to Mord—

"They know not yet of what to boast ere we have seen my son Thorhall. Njal told me that he had so taught Thorhall law, that he would turn out the best lawyer in Iceland when ever it were put to the proof."

Then a man was sent to Thorhall to tell him how things stood, and of Flosi's and Eyjolf's boasting, and the cry of the people that the suit for the Burning was quashed in Mord's bands.

"It will be well for them," says Thorhall, "if they get not disgrace from this. Thou shalt go and tell Mord to take witness, and swear

an oath, that the greater part of the inquest is rightly summoned, and then he shall bring that witness before the court, and then he may set the prosecution on its feet again; but he will have to pay a fine of three marks for every man that he has wrongly summoned; but he may not be prosecuted for that at this Thing; and now thou shalt go back."

He does so, and told Mord and Asgrim all, word for word, that Thorhall had said.

Then Mord went to the court, and took witness, and swore an oath that the greater part of the inquest was rightly summoned, and said then that he had set the prosecution on its feet again, and then he went on, "and so our foes shall have honour from something else than from this, that we have here taken a great false step."

Then there was a great roar that Mord handled the suit well; but it was said that Flosi and his men betook them only to quibbling and wrong.

Flosi asked Eyjolf if this could be good law, but he said he could not surely tell, but said the Lawman must settle this knotty point.

Then Thorkel Geiti's son went on their behalf to tell the Lawman how things stood, and asked whether this were good law that Mord had said.

"More men are great lawyers now," says Skapti, "than I thought I must tell thee, then, that this is such good law in all points, that there is not a word to say against it; but still I thought that I alone would know this, now that Njal was dead, for he was the only man I ever knew who knew it."

Then Thorkel went back to Flosi and Eyjolf, and said that this was good law.

Then Mord Valgard's son went to the court and took witness. "I take witness to this," he said, "that I bid those neighbours on the inquest in the suit which I set on foot against Flosi Thord's son now to utter their finding, and to find it either against him or for him; I bid them by a lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges may bear it across the court."

Then the neighbours on Mord's inquest went to the court, and one uttered their finding, but all confirmed it by their consent; and they spoke thus, word for word—

"Mord Valgard's son summoned nine of us thanes on this inquest, but here we stand five of us, but four have been challenged and set aside, and now witness has been borne as to the absence of the four who ought to have uttered this finding along with us, and now we are bound by law to utter our finding. We were summoned to bear this witness, whether Flosi Thord's son rushed with an assault laid down by law on Helgi Njal's son, on that spot where Flosi Thord's son wounded Helgi Njal's son with a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death wound, and from which Helgi got his death. He summoned us to utter all those words which it was lawful for us to utter, and which he should call on us to answer before the court, and which belong to this suit; he summoned us, so that we heard what he said; he summoned us in a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son had handed over to him, and now we have all sworn an oath, and found our lawful finding, and are all agreed, and we utter our finding against Flosi, and we say that he is truly guilty in this suit. We nine men on this inquest of neighbours so shapen, utter this our finding before the Eastfirthers' Court over the head of John, as Mord summoned us to do; but this is the finding of all of us."

Again a second time they uttered their finding against Flosi, and uttered it first about the wounds, and last about the assault, but all their other words they uttered just as they had before uttered their finding against Flosi, and brought him in truly guilty in the suit.

Then Mord Valgard's son went before the court, and took witness that those neighbours whom he had summoned in the suit which he had set on foot against Flosi Thord's son had now uttered their finding, and brought him in truly guilty in the suit; he took witness to this for his own part, or for those who might wish to make use of this witness.

Again a second time Mord took witness and said—

"I take witness to this that I call on Flosi, or that man who has to undertake the lawful defence which he has handed over to him, to begin his defence to this suit which I have set on foot against him,

for now all the steps and proofs have been brought forward which belong by law to this suit; all witness borne, the finding of the inquest uttered and brought in, witness taken to the finding, and to all the steps which have gone before; but if any such thing arises in their lawful defence which I need to turn into a suit against them, then I claim the right to set that suit on foot against them. I bid this my lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges may hear."

"It gladdens me now, Eyjolf," said Flosi, "in my heart to think what a wry face they will make, and how their pates will tingle when thou bringest forward our defence."

CHAPTER CXLII. OF EYJOLF BOLVERK'S SON.

Then Eyjolf Bolverk's son went before the court, and took witness to this—

"I take witness that this is a lawful defence in this cause, that ye have pleaded the suit in the Eastfirthers' Court, when ye ought to have pleaded it in the Northlanders' Court; for Flosi has declared himself one of the Thingmen of Askel the priest; and here now are those two witnesses who were by, and who will bear witness that Flosi handed over his priesthood to his brother Thorgeir, but afterwards declared himself one of Askel the priest's Thingmen. I take witness to this for my own part, and for those who may need to make use of it."

Again Eyjolf took witness—"I take witness," he said, "to this, that I bid Mord who pleads this suit, or the next of kin, to listen to my oath, and to my declaration of the defence which I am about to bring forward; I bid him by a lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges may hear me."

Again Eyjolf took witness—

"I take witness to this, that I swear an oath on the book, a lawful oath, and say it before God, that I will so defend this cause, in the most truthful, and most just, and most lawful way, so far as I know, and so fulfil all lawful duties which belong to me at this Thing."

Then Eyjolf said—

"These two men I take to witness that I bring forward this lawful defence that this suit was pleaded in another Quarter Court, than that in which it ought to have been pleaded; and I say that for this sake their suit has come to naught; I utter this defence in this shape before the Eastfirthers' Court."

After that he let all the witness be brought forward which belonged to the defence, and then he took witness to all the steps in the defence to prove that they had all been duly taken.

After that Eyjolf again took witness and said—

"I take witness to this, that I forbid the judges, by a lawful protest before the priest, to utter judgment in the suit of Mord and his friends, for now a lawful defence has been brought before the court. I forbid you by a protest made before a priest; by a full, fair, and binding protest; as I have a right to forbid you by the common custom of the Althing, and by the law of the land."

After that he called on the judges to pronounce for the defence.

Then Asgrim and his friends brought on the other suits for the Burning, and those suits took their course.

CHAPTER CXLIII. THE COUNSEL OF THORHALL ASGRIM'S SON.

Now Asgrim and his friends sent a man to Thorhall, and let him be told in what a strait they had come.

"Too far off was I now," answers Thorhall, "for this cause might still not have taken this turn if I had been by. I now see their course that they must mean to summon you to the Fifth Court for contempt of the Thing. They must also mean to divide the Eastfirthers' Court in the suit for the Burning, so that no judgment may be given, for now they behave so as to show that they will stay at no ill. Now shalt thou go back to them as quickly as thou canst, and say that Mord must summon them both, both Flosi and Eyjolf, for having brought money into the Fifth Court, and make it a case of lesser outlawry. Then he shall summon them with a second summons for that they have brought forward that witness which had nothing to do with their cause, and so were guilty of

contempt of the Thing; and tell them that I say this, that if two suits for lesser outlawry hang over one and the same man, that he shall be adjudged a thorough outlaw at once. And for this ye must set your suits on foot first, that then ye will first go to trial and judgment."

Now the messenger went his way back and told Mord and Asgrim.

After that they went to the Hill of Laws, and Mord Valgard's son took witness.

"I take witness to this that I summon Flosi Thord's son, for that he gave money for his help here at the Thing to Eyjolf Bolverk's son. I say that he ought on this charge to be made a guilty outlaw, for this sake alone to be forwarded or to be allowed the right of frithstow [sanctuary], if his fine and bail are brought forward at the execution levied on his house and goods, but else to become a thorough outlaw. I say all his goods are forfeited, half to me and half to the men of the Quarter who have the right by law to take his goods after he has been outlawed. I summon this cause before the Fifth Court, whither the cause ought to come by law; I summon it to be pleaded now and to full outlawry. I summon with a lawful summons. I summon in the hearing of all men at the Hill of Laws."

With a like summons he summoned Eyjolf Bolverk's son, for that he had taken and received the money, and he summoned him for that sake to the Fifth Court.

Again a second time he summoned Flosi and Eyjolf, for that sake that they had brought forward that witness at the Thing which had nothing lawfully to do with the cause of the parties, and had so been guilty of contempt of the Thing; and he laid the penalty for that at lesser outlawry.

Then they went away to the Court of Laws, there the Fifth Court was then set.

Now when Mord and Asgrim had gone away, then the judges in the Eastfirthers' Court could not agree how they should give judgment, for some of them wished to give judgment for Flosi, but some for Mord and Asgrim. Then Flosi and Eyjolf tried to divide the court, and there they stayed, and lost time over that while the summoning at the Hill of Laws was going on. A little while after Flosi and Eyjolf were told that they had been summoned at the Hill of Laws into the Fifth Court, each of them with two summons. Then Eyjolf said—

"In an evil hour have we loitered here while they have been before us in quickness of summoning. Now hath come out Thorhall's cunning, and no man is his match in wit. Now they have the first right to plead their cause before the court, and that was everything for them; but still we will go to the Hill of Laws, and set our suit on foot against them, though that will now stand us in little stead."

Then they fared to the Hill of Laws, and Eyjolf summoned them for contempt of the Thing.

After that they went to the Fifth Court.

Now we must say that when Mord and Asgrim came to the Fifth Court, Mord took witness and bade them listen to his oath and the declaration of his suit, and to all those proofs and steps which he meant to bring forward against Flosi and Eyjolf. He bade them by a lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges could hear him across the court.

In the Fifth Court vouchers had to follow the oaths of the parties, and they had to take an oath after them.

Mord took witness.

"I take witness," he said, "to this, that I take a Fifth Court oath. I pray God so to help me in this light and in the next, as I shall plead this suit as I know to be most truthful, and just, and lawful. I believe with all my heart that Flosi is truly guilty in this suit, if I may bring forward my proofs; and I have not brought money into this court in this suit, and I will not bring it. I have not taken money, and I will not take it, neither for a lawful nor for an unlawful end."

The men who were Mord's vouchers then went two of them before the court, and took witness to this—

"We take witness that we take an oath on the book, a lawful oath; we pray God so to help us two in this light and in the next, as we lay it on our honour that we believe with all our hearts that Mord will so plead this suit as he knows to be most truthful, and

most just, and most lawful, and that he hath not brought money into this court in this suit to help himself, and that he will not offer it, and that he hath not taken money, nor will he take it, either for a lawful or unlawful end."

Mord had summoned nine neighbours who lived next to the Thingfield on the inquest in the suit, and then Mord took witness, and declared those four suits which he had set on foot against Flosi and Eyjolf; and Mord used all those words in his declaration that he had used in his summons. He declared his suits for outlawry in the same shape before the Fifth Court as he had uttered them when he summoned the defendants.

Mord took witness, and bade those nine neighbours on the inquest to take their seats west on the river-bank.

Mord took witness again, and bade Flosi and Eyjolf to challenge the inquest.

They went up to challenge the inquest, and looked narrowly at them, but could get none of them set aside; then they went away as things stood, and were very ill pleased with their case.

Then Mord took witness, and bade those nine neighbours whom he had before called on the inquest, to utter their finding, and to bring it in either for or against Flosi.

Then the neighbours on Mord's inquest came before the court, and one uttered the finding, but all the rest confirmed it by their consent. They had all taken the Fifth Court oath, and they brought in Flosi as truly guilty in the suit, and brought in their finding against him. They brought it in in such a shape before the Fifth Court over the head of the same man over whose head Mord had already declared his suit. After that they brought in all those findings which they were bound to bring in in all the other suits, and all was done in lawful form.

Eyjolf Bolverk's son and Flosi watched to find a flaw in the proceedings, but could get nothing done.

Then Mord Valgard's son took witness. "I take witness," said he, "to this, that these nine neighbours whom I called on these suits which I have had hanging over the heads of Flosi Thord's son, and Eyjolf Bolverk's son, have now uttered their finding, and have brought them in truly guilty in these suits."

He took this witness for his own part.

Again Mord took witness.

"I take witness," he said, "to this, that I bid Flosi Thord's son, or that other man who has taken his lawful defence in hand, now to begin their defence; for now all the steps and proofs have been brought forward in the suit, summons to listen to oaths, oaths taken, suit declared, witness taken to the summons, neighbours called on to take their seats on the inquest, defendant called on to challenge the inquest, finding uttered, witness taken to the finding."

He took this witness to all the steps that had been taken in the suit.

Then that man stood up over whose head the suit had been declared and pleaded, and summed up the case. He summed up first how Mord had bade them listen to his oath, and to his declaration of the suit, and to all the steps and proofs in it; then he summed up next how Mord took his oath and his vouchers theirs; then he summed up how Mord pleaded his suit, and used the very words in his summing up that Mord had before used in declaring and pleading his suit, and which he had used in his summons, and he said that the suit came before the Fifth Court in the same shape as it was when he uttered it at the summoning. Then he summed up that men had borne witness to the summoning, and repeated all those words that Mord had used in his summons, and which they had used in bearing their witness, "and which I now," he said, "have used in my summing up, and they bore their witness in the same shape before the Fifth Court as he uttered them at the summoning." After that he summed up that Mord bade the neighbours on the inquest to take their seats, then he told next of all how he bade Flosi to challenge the inquest, or that man who had undertaken this lawful defence for him; then he told how the neighbours went to the court, and uttered their finding, and brought in Flosi truly guilty in the suit, and how they brought in the finding of an inquest of nine men in that shape before the Fifth Court. Then he summed up how Mord took witness to all the steps in the suit, and how he had bidden the defendant to begin his defence.

After that Mord Valgard's son took witness. "I take witness," he said, "to this, that I forbid Flosi Thord's son, or that other man who has undertaken the lawful defence for him, to set up his defence; for now are all the steps taken which belong to the suit, when the case has been summed up and the proofs repeated."

After that the foreman added these words of Mord to his summing up.

Then Mord took witness, and prayed the judges to give judgment in this suit.

Then Gizur the white said, "Thou wilt have to do more yet, Mord, for four twelves can have no right to pass judgment."

Now Flosi said to Eyjolf, "What counsel is to be taken now?"

Then Eyjolf said, "Now we must make the best of a bad business; but still, we will bide our time, for now I guess that they will make a false step in their suit, for Mord prayed for judgment at once in the suit, but they ought to call and set aside six men out of the court, and after that they ought to offer us to call and set aside six other men, but we will not do that, for then they ought to call and set aside those six men, and they will perhaps overlook that; then all their case has come to naught if they do not do that, for three twelves have to judge in every cause."

"Thou art a wise man, Eyjolf," said Flosi, "so that few can come nigh thee."

Mord Valgard's son took witness.

"I take witness," he said, "to this, that I call and set aside these six men out of the court"—and named them all by name—"I do not allow you to sit in the court; I call you out and set you aside by the rightful custom of the Althing, and the law of the land."

After that he offered Eyjolf and Flosi, before witnesses, to call out by name and set aside other six men, but Flosi and Eyjolf would not call them out.

Then Mord made them pass judgment in the cause; but when the judgment was given, Eyjolf took witness, and said that all their judgment had come to naught, and also everything else that had been done, and his ground was that three twelves and one half had judged, when three only ought to have given judgment.

"And now we will follow up our suits before the Fifth Court," said Eyjolf, "and make them outlaws."

Then Gizur the white said to Mord Valgard's son—

"Thou hast made a very great mistake in taking such a false step, and this is great ill-luck; but what counsel shall we now take, kinsman Asgrim?" says Gizur.

Then Asgrim said—"Now we will send a man to my son Thorhall, and know what counsel he will give us."

CHAPTER CXLIV. BATTLE AT THE ALTHING.

Now Snorri the priest hears how the causes stood, and then he begins to draw up his men in array below the "Great Rift," between it and Hadbooth, and laid down beforehand to his men how they were to behave.

Now the messenger comes to Thorhall Asgrim's son, and tells him how things stood, and how Mord Valgard's son and his friends would all be made outlaws, and the suits for manslaughter be brought to naught.

But when he heard that, he was so shocked at it that he could not utter a word. He jumped up then from his bed, and clutched with both hands his spear, Skarphedinn's gift, and drove it through his foot; then flesh clung to the spear, and the eye of the boil too, for he had cut it clean out of the foot, but a torrent of blood and matter poured out, so that it fell in a stream along the floor. Now he went out of the booth unhalting, and walked so hard that the messenger could not keep up with him, and so he goes until he came to the Fifth Court. There he met Grim the red, Flosi's kinsman, and as soon as ever they met, Thorhall thrust at him with the spear, and smote him on the shield and clove it in twain, but the spear passed right through him, so that the point came out between his shoulders. Thorhall cast him off his spear.

Then Kari Solmund's son caught sight of that, and said to Asgrim—

"Here, now, is come Thorhall thy son, and has straightway slain a man, and this is a great shame, if he alone shall have the heart to avenge the Burning."

"That shall not be," says Asgrim, "but let us turn on them now."

Then there was a mighty cry all over the host, and then they shouted their war-cries.

Flosi and his friends then turned against their foes, and both sides egged on their men fast.

Kari Solmund's son turned now thither where Arni Kol's son and Hallbjorn the strong were in front, and as soon as ever Hallbjorn saw Kari, he made a blow at him, and aimed at his leg, but Kari leapt up into the air, and Hallbjorn missed him. Kari turned on Arni Kol's son and cut at him, and smote him on the shoulder, and cut asunder the shoulder blade and collar bone, and the blow went right down into his breast, and Arni fell down dead at once to earth.

After that he hewed at Hallbjorn and caught him on the shield, and the blow passed through the shield, and so down and cut off his great toe. Holmstein hurled a spear at Kari, but he caught it in the air, and sent it back, and it was a man's death in Flosi's band.

Thorgeir Craggeir came up to where Hallbjorn the strong was in front, and Thorgeir made such a spear-thrust at him with his left hand that Hallbjorn fell before it, and had hard work to get on his feet again, and turned away from the fight there and then. Then Thorgeir met Thorwalld Kettle rumble's son, and hewed at him at once with the axe, "the ogress of war," which Skarphedinn had owned. Thorwalld threw his shield before him, and Thorgeir hewed the shield and cleft it from top to bottom, but the upper horn of the axe made its way into his breast, and passed into his trunk, and Thorwalld fell and was dead at once.

Now it must be told how Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and Thorhall his son, Hjalldi Skeggi's son, and Gizur the white, made an onslaught where Flosi and the sons of Sigfus, and the other Burners were; then there was a very hard fight, and the end of it was that they pressed on so hard, that Flosi and his men gave way before them. Gudmund the powerful, and Mord Valgard's son, and Thorgeir Craggeir, made their onslaught where the Axefirthers and Eastfirthers, and the men of Reykdale stood, and there too there was a very hard fight.

Kari Solmund's son came up where Bjarni Broddhelgi's son had the lead. Kari caught up a spear and thrust at him, and the blow fell on his shield. Bjarni slipped the shield on one side of him, else it had gone straight through him. Then he cut at Kari and aimed at his leg, but Kari drew back his leg and turned short round on his heel, and Bjarni missed him. Kari cut at once at him, and then a man ran forward and threw his shield before Bjarni. Kari cleft the shield in twain, and the point of the sword caught his thigh, and ripped up the whole leg down to the ankle. That man fell there and then, and was ever after a cripple so long as he lived.

Then Kari clutched his spear with both hands, and turned on Bjarni and thrust at him; he saw he had no other chance but to throw himself down side-long away from the blow, but as soon as ever Bjarni found his feet, away he fell back out of the fight.

Thorgeir Craggeir and Gizur the white fell on there where Holmstein the son of Bersi the wise, and Thorkel Geiti's son were leaders, and the end of the struggle was, that Holmstein and Thorkel gave way, and then arose a mighty hooting after them from the men of Gudmund the powerful.

Thorwalld Tjorfi's son of Lightwater got a great wound; he was shot in the forearm, and men thought that Halldor Gudmund the powerful's son had hurled the spear, but he bore that wound about with him all his life long, and got no atonement for it.

Now there was a mighty throng. But though we hear tell of some of the deeds that were done, still there are far many more of which men have handed down no stories.

Flosi had told them that they should make for the stronghold in the Great Rift if they were worsted, "for there," said he, "they will only be able to attack us on one side." But the band which Hall of the Side and his son Ljot led, had fallen away out of the fight before the onslaught of that father and son, Asgrim and Thorhall. They turned down east of Axewater, and Hall said—

"This is a sad state of things when the whole host of men at the Thing fight, and I would, kinsman Ljot, that we begged us help

even though that be brought against us by some men, and that we part them. Thou shalt wait for me at the foot of the bridge, and I will go to the booths and beg for help."

"If I see," said Ljot, "that Flosi and his men need help from our men, then I will at once run up and aid them."

"Thou wilt do in that as thou pleasest," says Hall, "but I pray thee to wait for me here."

Now flight breaks out in Flosi's band, and they all fly west across Axewater; but Asgrim and Gizur the white went after them and all their host. Flosi and his men turned down between the river and the Outwork booth. Snorri the priest had drawn up his men there in array, so thick that they could not pass that way, and Snorri the priest called out then to Flosi—

"Why are ye in such haste, or who chase you?"

"Thou askest not this," answered Flosi, "because thou dost not know it already; but whose fault is it that we cannot get to the stronghold in the Great Rift?"

"It is not my fault," says Snorri, "but it is quite true that I know whose fault it is, and I will tell thee if thou wilt; it is the fault of Thorwalld cropbeard and Kol."

They were both then dead, but they had been the worst men in all Flosi's band.

Again Snorri said to his men—

"Now do both, cut at them and thrust at them, and drive them away hence, they will then hold out but a short while here, if the others attack them from below; but then ye shall not go after them, but let both sides shift for themselves."

The son of Skapti Thorod's son was Thorstein gapemouth, as was written before, he was in the battle with Gudmund the powerful, his father-in-law, and as soon as Skapti knew that, he went to the booth of Snorri the priest, and meant to beg for help to part them; but just before he had got as far as the door of Snorri's booth, there the battle was hottest of all. Asgrim and his friends and his men were just coming up thither, and then Thorhall said to his father Asgrim—

"See there now is Skapti Thorod's son, father."

"I see him, kinsman," said Asgrim, and then he shot a spear at Skapti, and struck him just below where the calf was fattest, and so through both his legs. Skapti fell at the blow, and could not get up again, and the only counsel they could take who were by, was to drag Skapti flat on his face into the booth of a turf-cutter.

Then Asgrim and his men came up so fast that Flosi and his men gave way before them south along the river to the booths of the men of Modruvale. There there was a man outside one booth whose name was Solvi; he was boiling broth in a great kettle, and had just then taken the meat out, and the broth was boiling as hotly as it could.

Solvi cast his eyes on the Eastfirthers as they fled, and they were then just over against him, and then he said—"Can all these cowards who fly here be Eastfirthers, and yet Thorkel Geiti's son, he ran by as fast as any one of them, and very great lies have been told about him when men say that he is all heart, but now no one ran faster than he."

Hallbjorn the strong was near by them, and said—

"Thou shalt not have it to say that we are all cowards."

And with that he caught hold of him, and lifted him up aloft, and thrust him head down into the broth-kettle. Solvi died at once; but then a rush was made at Hallbjorn himself, and he had to turn and fly.

Flosi threw a spear at Bruni Hafliði's son, and caught him at the waist, and that was his bane; he was one of Gudmund the powerful's band.

Thorstein Hlenni's son took the spear out of the wound, and hurled it back at Flosi, and hit him on the leg, and he got a great wound and fell; he rose up again at once.

Then they passed on to the Waterfirther's booth, and then Hall and Ljot came from the east across the river, with all their band; but just when they came to the lava, a spear was hurled out of the band of Gudmund the powerful, and it struck Ljot in the middle, and he fell down dead at once; and it was never known surely who had done that manslaughter.

Flosi and his men turned up round the Waterfirther's booth, and then Thorgeir Craggeir said to Kari Solmund's son—

"Look, yonder now is Eyjolf Bolverk's son, if thou hast a mind to pay him off for the ring."

"That I ween is not far from my mind," says Kari, and snatched a spear from a man, and hurled it at Eyjolf, and it struck him in the waist, and went through him, and Eyjolf then fell dead to earth.

Then there was a little lull in the battle, and then Snorri the priest came up with his band, and Skapti was there in his company, and they ran in between them, and so they could not get at one another to fight.

Then Hall threw in his people with theirs, and was for parting them there and then, and so a truce was set, and was to be kept throughout the Thing, and then the bodies were laid out and borne to the church, and the wounds of those men were bound up who were hurt.

The day after men went to the Hill of Laws. Then Hall of the Side stood up and asked for a hearing, and got it at once; and he spoke thus—

"Here there have been hard happenings in lawsuits and loss of life at the Thing, and now I will show again that I am little-hearted, for I will now ask Asgrim and the others who take the lead in these suits, that they grant us an atonement on even terms;" and so he goes on with many fair words.

Kari Solmund's son said—

"Though all others take an atonement in their quarrels, yet will I take no atonement in my quarrel; for ye will wish to weigh these manslaughterings against the Burning, and we cannot bear that."

In the same way spoke Thorgeir Craggeir.

Then Skapti Thorod's son stood up and said—

"Better had it been for thee, Kari, not to have run away from thy father-in-law and thy brothers-in-law, than now to sneak out of this atonement."

Then Kari sang these verses—

Warrior wight that weapon wielded
Spare thy speering why we fled,
Oft for less falls hail of battle,
Forth we fled to wreak revenge;
Who was he, faint-hearted foeman,
Who, when tongues of steel sung high,
Stole beneath the booth for shelter,
While his beard blushed red for shame?

Many fetters Skapti fettered
When the men, the Gods of fight,
From the fray fared all unwilling
Where the skald scarce held his shield;
Then the sutlers dragged the lawyer
Stout in scolding to their booth,
Laid him low amongst the riffraff,
How his heart then quaked for fear.

Men who skim the main on sea stag
Well in this ye showed your sense,
Making game about the Burning,
Mocking Helgi, Grim, and Njal;
Now the moor round rocky Swinestye,
As men run and shake their shields,
With another grunt shall rattle
When this Thing is past and gone.

Then there was great laughter. Snorri the priest smiled, and sang this between his teeth, but so that many heard—

Skill hath Skapti us to tell
Whether Asgrim's shaft flew well;
Holmstein hurried swift to flight,
Thorstein turned him soon to fight.

Now men burst out in great fits of laughter.

Then Hall of the Side said—

"All men know what a grief I have suffered in the loss of my son Ljot; many will think that he would be valued dearest of all those men who have fallen here; but I will do this for the sake of an atonement—I will put no price on my son, and yet will come forward and grant both pledges and peace to those who are my adversaries. I beg thee, Snorri the priest, and other of the best men, to bring this about, that there may be an atonement between us."

Now he sits him down, and a great hum in his favour followed, and all praised his gentleness and good-will.

Then Snorri the priest stood up and made a long and clever speech, and begged Asgrim and the others who took the lead in the quarrel to look towards an atonement.

Then Asgrim said—

"I made up my mind when Flosi made an inroad on my house that I would never be atoned with him; but now Snorri the priest, I will take an atonement from him for thy word's sake and other of our friends."

In the same way spoke Thorleif crow and Thorgrim the big, that they were willing to be atoned, and they urged in every way their brother Thorgeir Craggeir to take an atonement also; but he hung back, and says he would never part from Kari.

Then Gizur the white said—

"Now Flosi must see that he must make his choice, whether he will be atoned on the understanding that some will be out of the atonement."

Flosi says he will take that atonement; "and methinks it is so much the better," he says, "that I have fewer good men and true against me."

Then Gudmund the powerful said—

"I will offer to hansel peace on my behalf for the slayings that have happened here at the Thing, on the understanding that the suit for the Burning is not to fall to the ground."

In the same way spoke Gizur the white and Hjalalti Skeggi's son, Asgrim Ellidagrim's son and Mord Valgard's son.

In this way the atonement came about, and then hands were shaken on it, and twelve men were to utter the award; and Snorri the priest was the chief man in the award, and others with him. Then the manslaughterings were set off the one against the other, and those men who were over and above were paid for in fines. They also made an award in the suit about the Burning.

Njal was to be atoned for with a triple fine, and Bergthora with two. The slaying of Skarphedinn was to be set off against that of Hauskuld the Whiteness priest. Both Grim and Helgi were to be paid for with double fines; and one full man-fine should be paid for each of those who had been burnt in the house.

No atonement was taken for the slaying of Thord Kari's son.

It was also in the award that Flosi and all the Burners should go abroad into banishment, and none of them was to sail the same summer unless he chose; but if he did not sail abroad by the time that three winters were spent, then he and all the Burners were to become thorough outlaws. And it was also said that their outlawry might be proclaimed either at the Harvest-Thing or Spring-Thing, whichever men chose; and Flosi was to stay abroad three winters.

As for Gunnar Lambi's son, and Grani Gunnar's son. Glum Hildir's son, and Kol Thorstein's son, they were never to be allowed to come back.

Then Flosi was asked if he would wish to have a price put upon his wound, but he said he would not take bribes for his hurt.

Eyjolf Bolverk's son had no fine awarded for him, for his unfairness and wrongfulness.

And now the settlement and atonement was handselled, and was well kept afterwards.

Asgrim and his friends gave Snorri the priest good gifts, and he had great honour from these suits.

Skapti got a fine for his hurt.

Gizur the white, and Hjalalti Skeggi's son, and Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, asked Gudmund the powerful to come and see them at home. He accepted the bidding, and each of them gave him a gold ring.

Now Gudmund rides home north, and had praise from every man for the part he had taken in these quarrels.

Thorgeir Craggeir asked Kari to go along with him, but yet first of all they rode with Gudmund right up to the fells north. Kari gave Gudmund a golden brooch, but Thorgeir gave him a silver belt, and each was the greatest treasure. So they parted with the utmost friendship, and Gudmund is out of this story.

Kari and Thorgeir rode south from the fell, and down to the Rapes, and so to Thurso-water.

Flosi, and the Burners along with him, rode east to Fleetlithe, and he allowed the sons of Sigfus to settle their affairs at home. Then Flosi heard that Thorgeir and Kari had ridden north with

Gudmund the powerful, and so the Burners thought that Kari and his friend must mean to stay in the north country; and then the sons of Sigfus asked leave to go east under Eyjafell to get in their money, for they had money out on call at Headbrink. Flosi gave them leave to do that, but still bade them be ware of themselves, and be as short a time about it as they could.

Then Flosi rode up by Godaland, and so north of Eyjafell Jokul, and did not draw bridle before he came home east to Swinefell.

Now it must be said that Hall of the Side had suffered his son to fall without a fine, and did that for the sake of an atonement, but then the whole host of men at the Thing agreed to pay a fine for him, and the money so paid was not less than eight hundred in silver, but that was four times the price of a man; but all the others who had been with Flosi got no fines paid for their hurts, and were very ill pleased at it.

CHAPTER CXLV. OF KARI AND THORGEIR.

Those two, Kari Solmund's and Thorgeir Craggeir, rode that day east across Markfleet, and so on east to Selialandsmull. They found there some women. The wives knew them, and said to them—

"Ye two are less wanton than the sons of Sigfus yonder, but still ye fare unwarily."

"Why do ye talk thus of the sons of Sigfus, or what do ye know about them?"

"They were last night," they said, "at Raufarfell, and meant to get to Myrdale to-night, but still we thought they must have some fear of you, for they asked when he would be likely to come home."

Then Kari and Thorgeir went on their way and spurred their horses.

"What shall we lay down for ourselves to do now," said Thorgeir, "or what is most to thy mind? Wilt thou that we ride on their track?"

"I will not hinder this," answers Kari, "nor will I say what ought to be done, for it may often be that those live Long who are slain with words alone; but I well know what thou meanest to take on thyself, thou must mean to take on thy hands eight men, and after all that is less than it was when thou slewest those seven in the sea-crag, and let thyself down by a rope to get at them; but it is the way with all you kinsmen, that ye always wish to be doing some famous feat, and now I can do no less than stand by thee and have my share in the story. So now we two alone will ride after them, for I see that thou hast so made up thy mind."

After that they rode east by the upper way, and did not pass by Holt, for Thorgeir would not that any blame should be laid at his brother's door for what might be done.

Then they rode east to Myrdale, and there they met a man who had turf-panniers on his horse. He began to speak thus—

"Too few men, messmate Thorgeir, hast thou now in thy company."

"How is that?" says Thorgeir.

"Why," said the other, "because the prey is now before thy hand. The sons of Sigfus rode by a while ago, and mean to sleep the whole day east in Carlinedale, for they mean to go no farther to-night than to Headbrink."

After that they rode on their way east on Arnstacks heath, and there is nothing to be told of their journey before they came to Carlinedale-water.

The stream was high, and now they rode up along the river, for they saw their horses with saddles. They rode now thitherward, and saw that there were men asleep in a dell and their spears were standing upright in the ground a little below them. They took the spears from them, and threw them into the river.

Then Thorgeir said—

"Wilt thou that we wake them?"

"Thou hast not asked this," answers Kari, "because thou hast not already made up thy mind not to fall on sleeping men, and so to slay a shameful manslaughter."

After that they shouted to them, and then they all awoke and grasped at their arms.

They did not fall on them till they were armed.

Thorgeir Craggeir runs thither where Thorkel Sigfus' son stood, and just then a man ran behind his back, but before he could do Thorgeir any hurt, Thorgeir lifted the axe, "the ogress of war," with both hands, and dashed the hammer of the axe with a back-blow into the head of him that stood behind him, so that his skull was shattered to small bits.

"Slain is this one," said Thorgeir; and down the man fell at once, and was dead.

But when he dashed the axe forward, he smote Thorkel on the shoulder, and hewed it off, arm and all.

Against Kari came Mord Sigfus' son, and Sigmund Sigfus' son, and Lambi Sigurd's son; the last ran behind Kari's back, and thrust at him with a spear; Kari caught sight of him, and leapt up as the blow fell, and stretched his legs far apart, and so the blow spent itself on the ground, but Kari jumped down on the spear-shaft, and snapped it in sunder. He had a spear in one hand, and a sword in the other, but no shield. He thrust with the right hand at Sigmund Sigfus' son, and smote him on his breast, and the spear came out between his shoulders, and down he fell and was dead at once. With his left hand he made a cut at Mord, and smote him on the hip, and cut it asunder, and his backbone too; he fell flat on his face, and was dead at once.

After that he turned sharp round on his heel like a whipping-top, and made at Lambi Sigurd's son, but he took the only way to save himself, and that was by running away as hard as he could.

Now Thorgeir turns against Leidolf the strong, and each hewed at the other at the same moment, and Leidolf's blow was so great that it shore off that part of the shield on which it fell.

Thorgeir had hewn with "the ogress of war," holding it with both hands, and the lower horn fell on the shield and clove it in twain, but the upper caught the collar bone and cut it in two, and tore on down into the breast and trunk. Kari came up just then, and cut off Leidolf's leg at mid-thigh, and then Leidolf fell and died at once.

Kettle of the Mark said—"We will now run for our horses, for we cannot hold our own here, for the overbearing strength of these men."

Then they ran for their horses, and leapt on their backs; and Thorgeir said—

"Wilt thou that we chase them? if so, we shall yet slay some of them."

"He rides last," says Kari, "whom I would not wish to slay, and that is Kettle of the Mark, for we have two sisters to wife; and besides, he has behaved best of all of them as yet in our quarrels."

Then they got on their horses, and rode till they came home to Holt. Then Thorgeir made his brothers fare away east to Skoga, for they had another farm there, and because Thorgeir would not that his brothers should be called truce-breakers.

Then Thorgeir kept many men there about him, so that there were never fewer than thirty fighting men there.

Then there was great joy there, and men thought Thorgeir had grown much greater, and pushed himself on; both he and Kari too. Men long kept in mind this hunting of theirs, how they two rode upon fifteen men and slew those five, but put those ten to flight who got away.

Now it is to be told of Kettle, that they rode as they best might till they came home to Swinefell, and told how bad their journey had been.

Flosi said it was only what was to be looked for; "and this is a warning that ye should never do the like again."

Flosi was the merriest of men, and the best of hosts, and it is so said that he had most of the chieftain in him of all the men of his time.

He was at home that summer, and the winter too.

But that winter, after Yule, Hall of the Side came from the east, and Kol his son. Flosi was glad at his coming, and they often talked about the matter of the Burning. Flosi said they had already paid a great fine, and Hall said it was pretty much what he had guessed would come of Flosi's and his friends' quarrel. Then he asked him what counsel he thought best to be taken, and Hall answers—

"The counsel I give is, that thou beest atoned with Thorgeir if there be a choice, and yet he will be hard to bring to take any atonement."

"Thinkest thou that the manslaughters will then be brought to an end?" asks Flosi.

"I do not think so," says Hall; "but you will have to do with fewer foes if Kari be left alone; but if thou art not atoned with Thorgeir, then that will be thy bane."

"What atonement shall we offer him?" asks Flosi.

"You will all think that atonement hard," says Hall, "which he will take, for he will not hear of an atonement unless he be not called on to pay any fine for what he has just done, but he will have fines for Njal and his sons, so far as his third share goes."

"That is a hard atonement," says Flosi.

"For thee at least," says Hall, "that atonement is not hard, for thou hast not the blood-feud after the sons of Sigfus; their brothers have the blood-feud, and Hamond the halt after his son; but thou shalt now get an atonement from Thorgeir, for I will now ride to his house with thee, and Thorgeir will in anywise receive me well; but no man of those who are in this quarrel will dare to sit in his house on Fleetlithe if they are out of the atonement, for that will be their bane; and, indeed, with Thorgeir's turn of mind, it is only what must be looked for."

Now the sons of Sigfus were sent for, and they brought this business before them; and the end of their speech was, on the persuasion of Hall, that they all thought what he said right, and were ready to be atoned.

Grani Gunnar's son and Gunnar Lambi's son said—

"It will be in our power, if Kari be left alone behind, to take care that he be not less afraid of us than we of him."

"Easier said than done," says Hall, "and ye will find it a dear bargain to deal with him. Ye will have to pay a heavy fine before you have done with him."

After that they ceased speaking about it.

CHAPTER CXLVI. THE AWARD OF ATONEMENT WITH THORGEIR CRAGGEIR.

Hall of the Side and his son Kol, seven of them in all, rode west over Loomnip's Sand, and so west over Arnstacksheath, and did not draw bridle till they came into Myrdales. There they asked whether Thorgeir would be at home at Holt, and they were told that they would find him at home.

The men asked whither Hall meant to go.

"Thither to Holt," he said.

They said they were sure he went on a good errand.

He stayed there some while and baited their horses, and after that they mounted their horses and rode to Solheim about even, and they were there that night, but the day-after they rode to Holt.

Thorgeir was out of doors, and Kari too, and their men, for they had seen Hall's coming. He rode in a blue cape, and had a little axe studded with silver in his hand; but when they came into the "town," Thorgeir went to meet him, and helped him off his horse, and both he and Kari kissed him and led him in between them into the sitting-room, and sate him down in the high seat on the dais, and they asked him tidings about many things.

He was there that night. Next morning Hall raised the question of the atonement with Thorgeir, and told him what terms they offered him; and he spoke about them with many fair and kindly words.

"It may be well known to thee," answers Thorgeir, "that I said I would take no atonement from the Burners."

"That was quite another matter then," says Hall; "ye were then wroth with fight, and, besides, ye have done great deeds in the way of manslaying since."

"I daresay ye think so," says Thorgeir, "but what atonement do ye offer to Kari?"

"A fitting atonement shall be offered him," says Hall, "if he will take it."

Then Kari said—

"I pray this of thee, Thorgeir, that thou wilt be atoned, for thy lot cannot be better than good."

"Methinks," says Thorgeir, "it is ill done to take an atonement, and sunder myself from thee, unless thou takest the same atonement as I."

"I will not take any atonement," says Kari, "but yet I say that we have avenged the Burning; but my son, I say, is still unavenged, and I mean to take that on myself alone, and see what I can get done."

But Thorgeir would take no atonement before Kari said that he would take it ill if he were not atoned. Then Thorgeir handselled a truce to Flosi and his men, as a step to a meeting for atonement; but Hall did the same on behalf of Flosi and the sons of Sigfus.

But ere they parted, Thorgeir gave Hall a gold ring and a scarlet cloak, but Kari gave him a silver brooch, and there were hung to it four crosses of gold. Hall thanked them kindly for their gifts, and rode away with the greatest honour. He did not draw bridle till he came to Swinefell, and Flosi gave him a hearty welcome. Hall told Flosi all about his errand and the talk he had with Thorgeir, and also that Thorgeir would not take the atonement till Kari told him he would quarrel with him if he did not take it; but that Kari would take no atonement.

"There are few men like Kari," said Flosi, "and I would that my mind were shapen altogether like his."

Hall and Kol stayed there some while, and afterwards they rode west at the time agreed on to the meeting for atonement, and met at Headbrink, as had been settled between them.

Then Thorgeir came to meet them from the west, and then they talked over their atonement, and all went off as Hall had said.

Before the atonement, Thorgeir said that Kari should still have the right to be at his house all the same if he chose.

"And neither side shall do the others any harm at my house; and I will not have the trouble of gathering in the fines from each of the Burners; but my will is that Flosi alone shall be answerable for them to me, but he must get them in from his followers. My will also is that all that award which was made at the Thing about the Burning shall be kept and held to; and my will also is, Flosi, that thou payest me up my third share in unclipped coin."

Flosi went quickly into all these terms.

Thorgeir neither gave up the banishment nor the outlawry.

Now Flosi and Hall rode home east, and then Hall said to Flosi—

"Keep this atonement well, son-in-law, both as to going abroad and the pilgrimage to Rome, and the fines, and then thou wilt be thought a brave man, though thou hast stumbled into this misdeed, if thou fulfillest handsomely all that belongs to it."

Flosi said it should be so.

Now Hall rode home east, but Flosi rode home to Swinefell, and was at home afterwards.

CHAPTER CXLVII. KARI COMES TO BJORN'S HOUSE IN THE MARK.

Thorgeir Craggeir rode home from the peace-meeting, and Kari asked whether the atonement had come about. Thorgeir said that they now fully atoned.

Then Kari took his horse and was for riding away.

"Thou hast no need to ride away," says Thorgeir, "for it was laid down in our atonement that thou shouldst be here as before if thou chocest."

"It shall not be so, cousin, for as soon as ever I slay a man they will be sure to say that thou wert in the plot with me, and I will not have that; but I wish this, that thou wouldst let me hand over in trust to thee my goods, and the estates of me and my wife Helga Njal's daughter, and my three daughters, and then they will not be seized by those adversaries of mine."

Thorgeir agreed to what Kari wished to ask of him, and then Thorgeir had Kari's goods handed over to him in trust.

After that Kari rode away. He had two horses and his weapons and outer clothing, and some ready money in gold and silver.

Now Kari rode west by Selialandsmull and up along Markfleet, and so on up into Thorsmark. There there are three farms all called "Mark." At the midmost farm dwelt that man whose name was Bjorn, and his surname was Bjorn the white; he was the son

of Kadal, the son of Bjalfi. Bjalfi had been the freedman of Asgerda, the mother of Njal and Holt-Thorir; Bjorn had to wife Valgerda, she was the daughter of Thorbrand, the son of Asbrand. Her mother's name was Gudlauga, she was a sister of Hamond, the father of Gunnar of Lithend; she was given away to Bjorn for his money's sake, and she did not love him much, but yet they had children together, and they had enough and to spare in the house.

Bjorn was a man who was always boasting and praising himself, but his housewife thought that bad. He was sharp sighted and swift of foot.

Thither Kari turned in as a guest, and they took him by both hands, and he was there that night. But the next morning Kari said to Bjorn—

"I wish thou wouldst take me in, for I should think myself well housed here with thee. I would too that thou shouldst be with me in my journeyings, as thou art a sharp sighted, swift-footed man, and besides I think thou wouldst be dauntless in an onslaught."

"I can't blame myself," says Bjorn, "for wanting either sharp sight, or dash, or any other bravery; but no doubt thou camest hither because all thy other earths are stopped. Still, at thy prayer, Kari, I will not look on thee as an everyday man; I will surely help thee in all that thou askest."

"The trolls take thy boasting and bragging," said his housewife, "and thou shouldst not utter such stuff and silliness to any one than thyself. As for me, I will willingly give Kari meat and other good things, which I know will be useful to him; but on Bjorn's hardihood, Kari, thou shalt not trust, for I am afraid that thou wilt find it quite otherwise than he says."

"Often hast thou thrown blame upon me," said Bjorn, "but for all that I put so much faith in myself that though I am put to the trial I will never give way to any man; and the best proof of it is this, that few try a tussle with me because none dare to do so."

Kari was there some while in hiding, and few men knew of it.

Now men think that Kari must have ridden to the north country to see Gudmund the powerful, for Kari made Bjorn tell his neighbours that he had met Kari on the beaten track, and that he rode thence up into Godaland, and so north to Goose-sand, and then north to Gudmund the powerful at Modruvale.

So that story was spread over all the country.

CHAPTER CXLVIII. OF FLOSI AND THE BURNERS.

Now Flosi spoke to the Burners, his companions—

"It will no longer serve our turn to sit still, for now we shall have to think of our going abroad and of our fines, and of fulfilling our atonement as bravely as we can, and let us take a passage wherever it seems most likely to get one."

They bade him see to all that. Then Flosi said—

"We will ride east to Hornfirth; for there that ship is laid up, which is owned by Eyjolf nosy, a man from Drontheim, but he wants to take to him a wife here, and he will not get the match made unless he settles himself down here. We will buy the ship of him, for we shall have many men and little freight. The ship is big and will take us all."

Then they ceased talking of it.

But a little after they rode east, and did not stop before they came east to Bjornness in Hornfirth, and there they found Eyjolf, for he had been there as a guest that winter.

There Flosi and his men had a hearty welcome, and they were there the night. Next morning Flosi dealt with the captain for the ship, but he said he would not be hard to sell the ship if he could get what he wanted for her. Flosi asked him in what coin he wished to be paid for her; the Easterling says he wanted land for her near where he then was.

Then Eyjolf told Flosi all about his dealings with his host, and Flosi says he will pull an oar with him, so that his marriage bargain might be struck, and buy the ship of him afterwards. The Easterling was glad at that. Flosi offered him land at Borgarhaven, and now the Easterling holds on with his suit to his host when Flosi was by, and Flosi threw in a helping word, so that the bargain was brought about between them.

Flosi made over the land at Borgarhaven to the Easterling, but shook hands on the bargain for the ship. He got also from the Easterling twenty hundreds in wares, and that was also in their bargain for the land.

Now Flosi rode back home. He was so beloved by his men that their wares stood free to him to take either on loan or gift, just as he chose.

He rode home to Swinefell, and was at home a while.

Then Flosi sent Kol Thorstein's son and Gunnar Lambi's son east to Hornfirth. They were to be there by the ship, and to fit her out, and set up booths, and sack the wares, and get all things together that were needful.

Now we must tell of the sons of Sigfus how they say to Flosi that they will ride west to Fleetlithe to set their houses in order, and get wares thence, and such other things as they needed. "Kari is not there now to be guarded against," they say, "if he is in the north country as is said."

"I know not," answers Flosi, "as to such stories, whether there be any truth in what is said of Kari's journeyings; methinks, we have often been wrong in believing things which are nearer to learn than this. My counsel is that ye go many of you together, and part as little as ye can, and be as wary of yourselves as ye may. Thou, too, Kettle of the Mark, shalt bear in mind that dream which I told thee, and which thou prayedst me to hide; for many are those in thy company who were then called."

"All must come to pass as to man's life," said Kettle, "as it is foredoomed; but good go with thee for thy warning."

Now they spoke no more about it.

After that the sons of Sigfus busked them and those men with them who were meant to go with them. They were eight in all, and then they rode away, and ere they went they kissed Flosi, and he bade them farewell, and said he and some of those who rode away would not see each other more. But they would not let themselves be hindered. They rode now on their way, and Flosi said that they should take his wares in Middleland, and carry them east, and do the same in Landsbreach and Woodcombe.

After that they rode to Skaptartongue, and so on the fell, and north of Eyjafell Jokul, and down into Godaland, and so down into the woods in Thorsmark.

Bjorn of the Mark caught sight of them coming, and went at once to meet them.

Then they greeted each other well, and the sons of Sigfus asked after Kari Solmund's son.

"I met Kari," said Bjorn, "and that is now very long since; he rode hence north on Goose-sand, and meant to go to Gudmund the powerful, and methought if he were here now, he would stand in awe of you, for he seemed to be left all alone."

Grani Gunnar's son said—

"He shall stand more in awe of us yet before we have done with him, and he shall learn that as soon as ever he comes within spearthrow of us; but as for us, we do not fear him at all, now that he is all alone."

Kettle of the Mark bade them be still, and bring out no big words.

Bjorn asked when they would be coming back.

"We shall stay near a week in Fleetlithe," said they; and so they told him when they should be riding back on the fell.

With that they parted.

Now the sons of Sigfus rode to their homes, and their households were glad to see them. They were there near a week.

Now Bjorn comes home and sees Kari, and told him all about the doings of the sons of Sigfus, and their purpose.

Kari said he had shown in this great faithfulness to him, and Bjorn said—

"I should have thought there was more risk of any other man's failing in that than of me if I had pledged my help or care to any one."

"Ah," said his mistress, "but you may still be bad and yet not be so bad as to be a traitor to thy master."

Kari stayed there six nights after that.

CHAPTER CXLIX. OF KARI AND BJORN.

Now Kari talks to Bjorn and says—

"We shall ride east across the fell and down into Skaptartongue, and fare stealthily over Flosi's country, for I have it in my mind to get myself carried abroad east in Alftafirth."

"This is a very risky journey," said Bjorn, "and few would have the heart to take it save thou and I."

"If thou backest Kari ill," said his housewife, "know this, that thou shalt never come afterwards into my bed, and my kinsmen shall share our goods between us."

"It is likelier, mistress," said he, "that thou wilt have to look out for something else than this if thou hast a mind to part from me; for I will bear my own witness to myself what a champion and daredevil I am when weapons clash."

Now they rode that day east on the fell to the north of the Jokul, but never on the highway, and so down into Skaptartongue, and above all the homesteads to Skaptarwater, and led their horses into a dell, but they themselves were on the look-out, and had so placed themselves that they could not be seen.

Then Kari said to Bjorn—

"What shall we do now if they ride down upon us here from the fell?"

"Are there not but two things to be done," said Bjorn; "one to ride away from them north under the crags, and so let them ride by us, or to wait and see if any of them lag behind, and then to fall on them."

They talked much about this, and one while Bjorn was for flying as fast as he could in every word he spoke, and at another for staying and fighting it out with them, and Kari thought this the greatest sport.

The sons of Sigfus rode from their homes the same day that they had named to Bjorn. They came to the Mark and knocked at the door there, and wanted to see Bjorn; but his mistress went to the door and greeted them. They asked at once for Bjorn, and she said he had ridden away down under Eyjafell, and so east under Sellalandsmull, and on east to Holt, "for he has some money to call in thereabouts," she said.

They believed this, for they knew that Bjorn had money out at call there.

After that they rode east on the fell, and did not stop before they came to Skaptartongue, and so rode down along Skaptarwater, and baited their horses just where Kari had thought they would. Then they split their band. Kettle of the Mark rode east into Middleland, and eight men with him, but the others laid them down to sleep, and were not ware of aught until Kari and Bjorn came up to them. A little ness ran out there into the river; into it Kari went and took his stand, and bade Bjorn stand back to back with him, and not to put himself too forward, "but give me all the help thou canst."

"Well," says Bjorn, "I never had it in my head that any man should stand before me as a shield, but still as things are thou must have thy way; but for all that, with my gift of wit and my swiftness I may be of some use to thee, and not harmless to our foes."

Now they all rose up and ran at them, and Modolf Kettle's son was quickest of them, and thrust at Kari with his spear. Kari had his shield before him, and the blow fell on it, and the spear stuck fast in the shield. Then Kari twists the shield so smartly, that the spear snapped short off, and then he drew his sword and smote at Modolf; but Modolf made a cut at him too, and Kari's sword fell on Modolf's hilt, and glanced off it on to Modolph's wrist, and took the arm off, and down it fell, and the sword too. Then Kari's sword passed on into Modolf's side, and between his ribs, and so Modolf fell down and was dead on the spot.

Grani Gunnar's son snatched up a spear and hurled it at Kari, but Kari thrust down his shield so hard that the point stood fast in the ground, but with his left hand he caught the spear in the air, and hurled it back at Grani, and caught up his shield again at once with his left hand. Grani had his shield before him, and the spear came on the shield and passed right through it, and into Grani's thigh just below the small guts, and through the limb, and so on,

pinning him to the ground, and he could not get rid of the spear before his fellows drew him off it, and carried him away on their shields, and laid him down in a dell.

There was a man who ran up to Kari's side, and meant to cut off his leg, but Bjorn cut off that man's arm, and sprang back again behind Kari, and they could not do him any hurt. Kari made a sweep at that same man with his sword, and cut him asunder at the waist.

Then Lambi Sigfus' son rushed at Kari, and hewed at him with his sword. Kari caught the blow sideways on his shield, and the sword would not bite; then Kari thrust at Lambi with his sword just below the breast, so that the point came out between his shoulders, and that was his death-blow.

Then Thorstein Geirleif's son rushed at Kari, and thought to take him in flank, but Kari caught sight of him, and swept at him with his sword across the shoulders, so that the man was cleft asunder at the chine.

A little while after he gave Gunnar of Skal, a good man and true, his death-blow. As for Bjorn, he had wounded three men who had tried to give Kari wounds, and yet he was never so far forward that he was in the least danger, nor was he wounded, nor was either of those companions hurt in that fight, but all those that got away were wounded.

Then they ran for their horses, and galloped them off across Skaptarwater as hard as they could; and they were so scared that they stopped at no house, nor did they dare to stay and tell the tidings anywhere.

Kari and Bjorn hooted and shouted after them as they galloped off. So they rode east to Woodcombe, and did not draw bridle till they came to Swinefell.

Flosi was not at home when they came thither, and that was why no hue and cry was made thence after Kari.

This journey of theirs was thought most shameful by all men.

Kari rode to Skal, and gave notice of these manslayings as done by his hand; there, too, he told them of the death of their master and five others, and of Grani's wound, and said it would be better to bear him to the house if he were to live.

Bjorn said he could not bear to slay him, though he said he was worthy of death; but those who answered him said they were sure few had bitten the dust before him. But Bjorn told them he had it now in his power to make as many of the Sidemen as he chose bite the dust; to which they said it was a bad look out.

Then Kari and Bjorn ride away from the house.

CHAPTER CL. MORE OF KARI AND BJORN.

Then Kari asked Bjorn—

"What counsel shall we take now? Now I will try what thy wit is worth."

"Dost thou think now," answered Bjorn, "that much lies on our being as wise as ever we can?"

"Ay," said Kari, "I think so surely."

"Then our counsel is soon taken," says Bjorn. "We will cheat them all as though they were giants; and now we will make as though we were riding north on the fell, but as soon as ever we are out of sight behind the brae, we will turn down along Skaptarwater, and hide us there where we think handiest, so long as the hue and cry is hottest, if they ride after us."

"So will we do," said Kari; "and this I had meant to do all along."

"And so you may put it to the proof," said Bjorn, "that I am no more of an everyday body in wit than I am in bravery."

Now Kari and his companion rode as they had purposed down along Skaptarwater, till they came where a branch of the stream ran away to the south-east; then they turned down along the middle branch, and did not draw bridle till they came into Middleland, and on that moor which is called Kringlemire; it has a stream of lava all around it.

Then Kari said to Bjorn that he must watch their horses, and keep a good look-out; "but as for me," he says, "I am heavy with sleep."

So Bjorn watched the horses, but Kari lay him down, and slept but a very short while ere Bjorn waked him up again, and he

had already led their horses together, and they were by their side. Then Bjorn said to Kari—

"Thou standest in much need of me, though! A man might easily have run away from thee if he had not been as brave-hearted as I am; for now thy foes are riding upon thee, and so thou must up and be doing."

Then Kari went away under a jutting crag, and Bjorn said—

"Where shall I stand now?"

"Well!" answers Kari, "now there are two choices before thee; one is, that thou standest at my back and have my shield to cover thyself with, if it can be of any use to thee; and the other is, to get on thy horse and ride away as fast as thou canst."

"Nay," says Bjorn, "I will not do that, and there are many things against it; first of all, may be, if I ride away, some spiteful tongues might begin to say that I ran away from thee for faintheartedness; and another thing is, that I well know what game they will think there is in me, and so they will ride after me, two or three of them, and then I should be of no use or help to thee after all. No! I will rather stand by thee and keep them off so long as it is fated."

Then they had not long to wait ere horses with pack-saddles were driven by them over the moor, and with them went three men.

Then Kari said—

"These men see us not."

"Then let us suffer them to ride on," said Bjorn.

So those three rode on past them; but the six others then came riding right up to them, and they all leapt off their horses straightway in a body, and turned on Kari and his companion.

First, Glum Hildir's son rushed at them, and thrust at Kari with a spear; Kari turned short round on his heel, and Glum missed him, and the blow fell against the rock. Bjorn sees that, and hewed at once the head off Glum's spear. Kari leant on one side and smote at Glum with his sword, and the blow fell on his thigh, and took off the limb high up in the thigh, and Glum died at once.

Then Vebrand and Asbrand the sons of Thorbrand ran up to Kari, but Kari flew at Vebrand and thrust his sword through him, but afterwards he hewed off both of Asbrand's feet from under him.

In this bout both Kari and Bjorn were wounded.

Then Kettle of the Mark rushed at Kari, and thrust at him with his spear. Kari threw up his leg, and the spear stuck in the ground, and Kari leapt on the spear-shaft, and snapped it in sunder.

Then Kari grasped Kettle in his arms, and Bjorn ran up just then, and wanted to slay him, but Kari said—

"Be still now. I will give Kettle peace; for though it may be that Kettle's life is in my power, still I will never slay him."

Kettle answers never a word, but rode away after his companions, and told those the tidings who did not know them already.

They told also these tidings to the men of the Hundred, and they gathered together at once a great force of armed men, and went straightway up all the water-courses, and so far up on the fell that they were three days in the chase; but after that they turned back to their own homes, but Kettle and his companions rode east to Swinefell, and told the tidings there.

Flosi was little stirred at what had befallen them, but said no one could tell whether things would stop there, "for there is no man like Kari of all that are now left in Iceland."

CHAPTER CLI. OF KARI AND BJORN AND THORGEIR.

Now we must tell of Bjorn and Kari that they ride down on the Sand, and lead their horses under the banks where the wild oats grew, and cut the oats for them, that they might not die of hunger. Kari made such a near guess, that he rode away thence at the very time that they gave over seeking for him. He rode by night up through the Hundred, and after that he took to the fell; and so on all the same way as they had followed when they rode east, and did not stop till they came to Midmark.

Then Bjorn said to Kari—

"Now shalt thou be my great friend before my mistress, for she will never believe one word of what I say; but everything lies on

what you do, so now repay me for the good following which I have yielded to thee."

"So it shall be; never fear," says Kari.

After that they ride up to the homestead, and then the mistress asked them what tidings, and greeted them well.

"Our troubles have rather grown greater, old lass!"

She answered little, and laughed; and then the mistress went on to ask—

"How did Bjorn behave to thee, Kari?"

"Bare is back," he answers, "without brother behind it, and Bjorn behaved well to me. He wounded three men, and, besides, he is wounded himself, and he stuck as close to me as he could in everything."

They were three nights there, and after that they rode to Holt to Thorgeir, and told him alone these tidings, for those tidings had not yet been heard there.

Thorgeir thanked him, and it was quite plain that he was glad at what he heard. He asked Kari what now was undone which he meant to do.

"I mean," answers Kari, "to kill Gunnar Lambi's son and Kol Thorstein's son, if I can get a chance. Then we have slain fifteen men, reckoning those five whom we two slew together. But one boon I will now ask of thee."

Thorgeir said he would grant him whatever he asked.

"I wish, then, that thou wilt take under thy safeguard this man whose name is Bjorn, and who has been in these slayings with me, and that thou wilt change farms with him, and give him a farm ready stocked here close by thee, and so hold thy hand over him that no vengeance may befall him; but all this will be an easy matter for thee who art such a chief."

"So it shall be," says Thorgeir.

Then he gave Bjorn a ready-stocked farm at Asolfskal, but he took the farm in the Mark into his own hands. Thorgeir flitted all Bjorn's household stuff and goods to Asolfskal, and all his live stock; and Thorgeir settled all Bjorn's quarrels for him, and he was reconciled to them with a full atonement. So Bjorn was thought to be much more of a man than he had been before.

Then Kari rode away, and did not draw rein till he came west to Tongue to Asgrim Ellidagrim's son. He gave Kari a most hearty welcome, and Kari told him of all the tidings that had happened in these slayings.

Asgrim was well pleased at them, and asked what Kari meant to do next.

"I mean," said Kari, "to fare abroad after them, and so dog their footsteps and slay them, if I can get at them."

Asgrim said there was no man like him for bravery and hardihood.

He was there some nights, and after that he rode to Gizur the white, and he took him by both hands. Kari stayed there some while, and then he told Gizur that he wished to ride down to Eyra.

Gizur gave Kari a good sword at parting.

Now he rode down to Eyra, and took him a passage with Kolbein the black; he was an Orkneyman and an old friend of Kari, and he was the most forward and brisk of men.

He took Kari by both hands, and said that one fate should befall both of them.

CHAPTER CLII. FLOSI GOES ABROAD.

Now Flosi rides east to Hornfirn, and most of the men in his Thing followed him, and bore his wares east, as well as all his stores and baggage which he had to take with him.

After that they busked them for their voyage, and fitted out their ship.

Now Flosi stayed by the ship until they were "boun." But as soon as ever they got a fair wind they put out to sea. They had a long passage and hard weather.

Then they quite lost their reckoning, and sailed on and on, and all at once three great waves broke over their ship, one after the other. Then Flosi said they must be near some land, and that this was a ground-swell. A great mist was on them, but the wind rose so that a great gale overtook them, and they scarce knew where

they were before they were dashed on shore at dead of night, and the men were saved, but the ship was dashed all to pieces, and they could not save their goods.

Then they had to look for shelter and warmth for themselves, and the day after they went up on a height. The weather was then good.

Flosi asked if any man knew this land, and there were two men of their crew who had fared thither before, and said they were quite sure they knew it, and, say they—

"We are come to Hrossey in the Orkneys."

"Then we might have made a better landing," said Flosi, "for Grim and Helgi, Njal's sons, whom I slew, were both of them of Earl Sigurd Hlodver's son's bodyguard."

Then they sought for a hiding-place, and spread moss over themselves, and so lay for a while, but not for long, ere Flosi spoke and said—

"We will not lie here any longer until the landsmen are ware of us."

Then they arose, and took counsel, and then Flosi said to his men—

"We will go all of us and give ourselves up to the Earl; for there is naught else to do, and the Earl has our lives at his pleasure if he chooses to seek for them."

Then they all went away thence, and Flosi said that they must tell no man any tidings of their voyage, or what manner of men they were, before he told them to the Earl.

Then they walked on until they met men who showed them to the town, and then they went in before the Earl, and Flosi and all the others hailed him.

The Earl asked what men they might be, and Flosi told his name, and said out of what part of Iceland he was.

The Earl had already heard of the Burning, and so he knew the men at once, and then the Earl asked Flosi—"What hast thou to tell me about Helgi Njal's son, my henchman?"

"This," said Flosi, "that I hewed off his head."

"Take them all," said the Earl.

Then that was done, and just then in came Thorstein, son of Hall of the Side. Flosi had to wife Steinvora, Thorstein's sister. Thorstein was one of Earl Sigurd's bodyguard, but when he saw Flosi seized and held, he went in before the Earl, and offered for Flosi all the goods he had.

The Earl was very wroth a long time, but at last the end of it was, by the prayer of good men and true, joined to those of Thorstein, for he was well backed by friends, and many threw in their word with his, that the Earl took an atonement from them, and gave Flosi and all the rest of them peace. The Earl held to that custom of mighty men that Flosi took that place in his service which Helgi Njal's son had filled.

So Flosi was made Earl Sigurd's henchman, and he soon won his way to great love with the Earl.

CHAPTER CLIII. KARI GOES ABROAD.

Those messmates Kari and Kolbein the black put out to sea from Eyrar half a month later than Flosi and his companions from Hornfirth.

They got a fine fair wind, and were but a short time out. The first land they made was the Fair Isle; it lies between Shetland and the Orkneys. There that man whose name was David the white took Kari into his house, and he told him all that he had heard for certain about the doings of the Burners. He was one of Kari's greatest friends, and Kari stayed with him for the winter.

There they heard tidings from the west out of the Orkneys of all that was done there.

Earl Sigurd bade to his feast at Yule Earl Gilli, his brother-in-law, out of the Southern Isles; he had to wife Swanlauga, Earl Sigurd's sister; and then too came to see Earl Sigurd that king from Ireland whose name was Sigtrygg. He was a son of Olaf rattle, but his mother's name was Kormlada; she was the fairest of all women, and best gifted in everything that was not in her own power, but it was the talk of men that she did all things ill over which she had any power.

Brian was the name of the king who first had her to wife, but they were then parted. He was the best-natured of all kings. He had his seat in Connaught, in Ireland; his brother's name was Wolf the quarrelsome, the greatest champion and warrior; Brian's foster-child's name was Kerthialfad. He was the son of King Kylfi, who had many wars with King Brian, and fled away out of the land before him, and became a hermit; but when King Brian went south on a pilgrimage, then he met King Kylfi, and then they were atoned, and King Brian took his son Kerthialfad to him, and loved him more than his own sons. He was then full grown when these things happened, and was the boldest of all men.

Duncan was the name of the first of King Brian's sons; the second was Margad; the third, Takt, whom we call Tann, he was the youngest of them; but the elder sons of King Brian were full grown, and the briskest of men.

Kormlada was not the mother of King Brian's children, and so grim was she against King Brian after their parting, that she would gladly have him dead.

King Brian thrice forgave all his outlaws the same fault, but if they misbehaved themselves oftener, then he let them be judged by the law; and from this one may mark what a king he must have been.

Kormlada egged on her son Sigtrygg very much to kill King Brian, and she now sent him to Earl Sigurd to beg for help.

King Sigtrygg came before Yule to the Orkneys, and there, too, came Earl Gilli, as was written before.

The men were so placed that King Sigtrygg sat in a high seat in the middle, but on either side of the king sat one of the earls. The men of King Sigtrygg and Earl Gilli sate on the inner side away from him, but on the outer side away from Earl Sigurd, sate Flosi and Thorstein, son of Hall of the Side, and the whole hall was full.

Now King Sigtrygg and Earl Gilli wished to hear of these tidings which had happened at the Burning, and so, also, what had befallen since.

Then Gunnar Lambi's son was got to tell the tale, and a stool was set for him to sit upon.

CHAPTER CLIV. GUNNAR LAMBI'S SON'S SLAYING.

Just at that very time Kari and Kolbein and David the white came to Hrossey unawares to all men. They went straightway up on land, but a few men watched their ship.

Kari and his fellows went straight to the Earl's homestead, and came to the hall about drinking time.

It so happened that just then Gunnar was telling the story of the Burning, but they were listening to him meanwhile outside. This was on Yule-day itself.

Now King Sigtrygg asked—

"How did Skarphedinn bear the Burning?"

"Well at first for a long time," said Gunnar, "but still the end of it was that he wept." And so he went on giving an unfair leaning in his story, but every now and then he laughed out loud.

Kari could not stand this, and then he ran in with his sword drawn, and sang this song—

Men of might, in battle eager,
Boast of burning Njal's abode,
Have the Princes heard how sturdy
Seahorse racers sought revenge?
Hath not since, on foemen holding
High the shield's broad orb aloft,
All that wrong been fully wrought?
Raw flesh ravens got to tear.

So he ran in up the hall, and smote Gunnar Lambi's son on the neck with such a sharp blow, that his head spun off on to the board before the king and the earls, and the board was all one gore of blood, and the Earl's clothing too.

Earl Sigurd knew the man that had done the deed, and called out—

"Seize Kari and kill him."

Kari had been one of Earl Sigurd's bodyguard, and he was of all men most beloved by his friends; and no man stood up a whit more for the Earl's speech.

"Many would say, Lord," said Kari, "that I have done this deed on your behalf, to avenge your henchman."

Then Flosi said—"Kari hath not done this without a cause; he is in no atonement with us, and he only did what he had a right to do."

So Kari walked away, and there was no hue and cry after him. Kari fared to his ship, and his fellows with him. The weather was then good, and they sailed off at once south to Caithness, and went on shore at Thraswick to the house of a worthy man whose name was Skeggi, and with him they stayed a very long while.

Those behind in the Orkneys cleansed the board, and bore out the dead man.

The Earl was told that they had set sail south for Scotland, and King Sigtrygg said—

"This was a mighty bold fellow, who dealt his stroke so stoutly, and never thought twice about it!"

Then Earl Sigurd answered—

"There is no man like Kari for dash and daring."

Now Flosi undertook to tell the story of the Burning, and he was fair to all; and therefore what he said was believed.

Then King Sigtrygg stirred in his business with Earl Sigurd, and bade him go to the war with him against King Brian.

The Earl was long steadfast, but the end of it was that he let the king have his way, but said he must have his mother's hand for his help, and be king in Ireland, if they slew Brian. But all his men besought Earl Sigurd not to go into the war, but it was all no good.

So they parted on the understanding that Earl Sigurd gave his word to go; but King Sigtrygg promised him his mother and the kingdom.

It was so settled that Earl Sigurd was to come with all his host to Dublin by Palm Sunday.

Then King Sigtrygg fared south to Ireland, and told his mother Kormlada that the Earl had undertaken to come, and also what he had pledged himself to grant him.

She showed herself well pleased at that, but said they must gather greater force still.

Sigtrygg asked whence this was to be looked for?

She said there were two vikings lying off the west of Man; and that they had thirty ships, and, she went on, "they are men of such hardihood that nothing can withstand them. The one's name is Ospak, and the other's Brodir. Thou shalt fare to find them, and spare nothing to get them into thy quarrel, whatever price they ask."

Now King Sigtrygg fares and seeks the vikings, and found them lying outside off Man; King Sigtrygg brings forward his errand at once, but Brodir shrank from helping him until he, King Sigtrygg, promised him the kingdom and his mother, and they were to keep this such a secret that Earl Sigurd should know nothing about it; Brodir too was to come to Dublin on Palm Sunday.

So King Sigtrygg fared home to his mother, and told her how things stood.

After that those brothers, Ospak and Brodir, talked together, and then Brodir told Ospak all that he and Sigtrygg had spoken of, and bade him fare to battle with him against King Brian, and said he set much store on his going.

But Ospak said he would not fight against so good a king.

Then they were both wroth, and sundered their band at once. Ospak had ten ships and Brodir twenty.

Ospak was a heathen, and the wisest of all men. He laid his ships inside in a sound, but Brodir lay outside him.

Brodir had been a Christian man and a mass-deacon by consecration, but he had thrown off his faith and become God's dastard, and now worshipped heathen fiends, and he was of all men most skilled in sorcery. He had that coat of mail on which no steel would bite. He was both tall and strong, and had such long locks that he tucked them under his belt. His hair was black.

CHAPTER CLV. OF SIGNS AND WONDERS.

It so happened one night that a great din passed over Brodir and his men, so that they all woke, and sprang up and put on their

clothes.

Along with that came a shower of boiling blood.

Then they covered themselves with their shields, but for all that many were scalded.

This wonder lasted all till day, and a man had died on board every ship.

Then they slept during the day, but the second night there was again a din, and again they all sprang up. Then swords leapt out of their sheaths, and axes and spears flew about in the air and fought.

The weapons pressed them so hard that they had to shield themselves, but still many were wounded, and again a man died out of every ship.

This wonder lasted all till day.

Then they slept again the day after.

But the third night there was a din of the same kind, and then ravens flew at them, and it seemed to them as though their beaks and claws were of iron.

The ravens pressed them so hard that they had to keep them off with their swords, and covered themselves with their shields, and so this went on again till day, and then another man had died in every ship.

Then they went to sleep first of all, but when Brodir woke up, he drew his breath painfully, and bade them put off the boat. "For," he said, "I will go to see Ospak."

Then he got into the boat and some men with him, but when he found Ospak he told him of the wonders which had befallen them, and bade him say what he thought they boded.

Ospak would not tell him before he pledged him peace, and Brodir promised him peace, but Ospak still shrank from telling him till night fell.

Then Ospak spoke and said—"When blood rained on you, therefore shall ye shed many men's blood, both of your own and others. But when ye heard a great din, then ye must have been shown the crack of doom, and ye shall all die speedily. But when weapons fought against you, that must forbode a battle; but when ravens pressed you, that marks the devils which ye put faith in, and who will drag you all down to the pains of hell."

Then Brodir was so wroth that he could answer never a word, but he went at once to his men, and made them lay his ships in a line across the sound, and moor them by bearing their cables on shore at either end of the line, and meant to slay them all next morning.

Ospak saw all their plan, and then he vowed to take the true faith, and to go to King Brian, and follow him till his death-day.

Then he took that counsel to lay his ships in a line, and punt them along the shore with poles, and cut the cables of Brodir's ships. Then the ships of Brodir's men began to fall aboard of one another when they were all fast asleep; and so Ospak and his men got out of the firth, and so west to Ireland, and came to Connaught.

Then Ospak told King Brian all that he had learnt, and took baptism, and gave himself over into the king's hand.

After that King Brian made them gather force over all his realm, and the whole host was to come to Dublin in the week before Palm Sunday.

CHAPTER CLVI. BRIAN'S BATTLE.

Earl Sigurd Hlodver's son busked him from the Orkneys, and Flosi offered to go with him.

The Earl would not have that, since he had his pilgrimage to fulfil.

Flosi offered fifteen men of his band to go on the voyage, and the Earl accepted them, but Flosi fared with Earl Gilli to the South-ern Isles.

Thorstein, the Son of Hall of the Side, went along with Earl Sigurd, and Hrafn the red, and Erling of Straumey.

He would not that Hareck should go, but said he would be sure to be the first to tell him the tidings of his voyage.

The Earl came with all his host on Palm Sunday to Dublin, and there too was come Brodir with all his host.

Brodir tried by sorcery how the fight would go, but the answer ran thus, that if the fight were on Good Friday King Brian would

fall but win the day; but if they fought before, they would all fall who were against him.

Then Brodir said that they must not fight before the Friday.

On the fifth day of the week a man rode up to Kormlada and her company on an apple-grey horse, and in his hand he held a halberd; he talked long with them.

King Brian came with all his host to the Burg, and on the Friday the host fared out of the Burg, and both armies were drawn up in array.

Brodir was on one wing of the battle, but King Sigtrygg on the other.

Earl Sigurd was in the mid battle.

Now it must be told of King Brian that he would not fight on the fast-day, and so a shieldburg was thrown round him, and his host was drawn up in array in front of it.

Wolf the quarrelsome was on that wing of the battle against which Brodir stood; but on the other wing, where Sigtrygg stood against them, were Ospak and his sons.

But in mid battle was Kerthialfad, and before him the banners were borne.

Now the wings fall on one another, and there was a very hard fight, Brodir went through the host of the foe, and felled all the foremost that stood there, but no steel would bite on his mail.

Wolf the quarrelsome turned then to meet him, and thrust at him thrice so hard that Brodir fell before him at each thrust, and was well-nigh not getting on his feet again; but as soon as ever he found his feet, he fled away into the wood at once.

Earl Sigurd had a hard battle against Kerthialfad, and Kerthialfad came on so fast that he laid low all who were in the front rank, and he broke the array of Earl Sigurd right up to his banner, and slew the banner-bearer.

Then he got another man to bear the banner, and there was again a hard fight.

Kerthialfad smote this man too his death blow at once, and so on one after the other all who stood near him.

Then Earl Sigurd called on Thorstein the son of Hall of the Side, to bear the banner, and Thorstein was just about to lift the banner, but then Asmund the white said—

"Don't bear the banner! for all they who bear it get their death."

"Hrafn the red!" called out Earl Sigurd, "bear thou the banner."

"Bear thine own devil thyself," answered Hrafn.

Then the Earl said—

"'Tis fittest that the beggar should bear the bag;" and with that he took the banner from the staff and put it under his cloak.

A little after Asmund the white was slain, and then the Earl was pierced through with a spear.

Ospak had gone through all the battle on his wing, he had been sore wounded, and lost both his sons ere King Sigtrygg fled before him.

Then flight broke out throughout all the host.

Thorstein Hall of the Side's son stood still while all the others fled, and tied his shoe-string. Then Kerthialfad asked why he ran not as the others.

"Because," said Thorstein, "I can't get home to-night, since I am at home out in Iceland."

Kerthialfad gave him peace.

Hrafn the red was chased out into a certain river; he thought he saw there the pains of hell down below him, and he thought the devils wanted to drag him to them.

Then Hrafn said—

"Thy dog, Apostle Peter! hath run twice to Rome, and he would run the third time if thou gavest him leave."

Then the devils let him loose, and Hrafn got across the river.

Now Brodir saw that King Brian's men were chasing the fleers, and that there were few men by the shieldburg.

Then he rushed out of the wood, and broke through the shieldburg, and hewed at the king.

The lad Takt threw his arm in the way, and the stroke took it off and the king's head too, but the king's blood came on the lad's stump, and the stump was healed by it on the spot.

Then Brodir called out with a loud voice—

"Now let man tell man that Brodir felled Brian."

Then men ran after those who were chasing the fleers, and they were told that King Brian had fallen, and then they turned back straightway, both Wolf the quarrelsome and Kerthialfad.

Then they threw a ring round Brodir and his men, and threw branches of trees upon them, and so Brodir was taken alive.

Wolf the quarrelsome cut open his belly, and led him round and round the trunk of a tree, and so wound all his entrails out of him, and he did not die before they were all drawn out of him.

Brodir's men were slain to a man.

After that they took King Brian's body and laid it out. The king's head had grown fast to the trunk.

Fifteen men of the Burners fell in Brian's battle, and there, too, fell Halldor the son of Gudmund the powerful, and Erling of Straumey.

On Good Friday that event happened in Caithness that a man whose name was Daurrud went out. He saw folk riding twelve together to a bower, and there they were all lost to his sight. He went to that bower and looked in through a window slit that was in it, and saw that there were women inside, and they had set up a loom. Men's heads were the weights, but men's entrails were the warp and wed, a sword was the shuttle, and the reels were arrows.

They sang these songs, and he learnt them by heart--

THE WOOF OF WAR.

See! warp is stretched
For warriors' fall,
Lo! weft in loom
'Tis wet with blood;
Now fight foreboding,
'Neath friends' swift fingers,
Our gray woof waxeth
With war's alarms,
Our warp bloodred,
Our weft corseblue.

This woof is y-woven
With entrails of men,
This warp is hardweighted
With heads of the slain,
Spears blood-besprinkled
For spindles we use,
Our loom ironbound,
And arrows our reels;
With swords for our shuttles
This war-woof we work;
So weave we, weird sisters,
Our warwinning woof.

Now War-winner walketh
To weave in her turn.
Now Swordswinger steppeth,
Now Swiftstroke, now Storm;
When they speed the shuttle
How spear-heads shall flash!
Shields crash, and helmgnaver
On harness bite hard!

Wind we, wind swiftly
Our warwinning woof.
Woof erst for king youthful
Foredoomed as his own,
Forth now we will ride,
Then through the ranks rushing
Be busy where friends
Blows blithe give and take.

Wind we, wind swiftly
Our warwinning woof,
After that let us steadfastly
Stand by the brave king;
Then men shall mark mournful
Their shields red with gore,
How Swordstroke and Spearthrust
Stood stout by the prince.

Wind we, wind swiftly
Our warwinning woof;
When sword-bearing rovers
To banners rush on,
Mind, maidens, we spare not
One life in the fray!
We corse-choosing sisters
Have charge of the slain.

Now new-coming nations
That island shall rule.
Who on outlying headlands

Abode ere the fight;
I say that King mighty
To death now is done,
Now low before spearpoint
That Earl bows his head.

Soon over all Ersemen
Sharp sorrow shall fall,
That woe to those warriors
Shall wane nevermore;
Our woof now is woven.
Now battle-field waste,
O'er land and o'er water
War tidings shall leap.

Now surely 'tis gruesome
To gaze all around,
When bloodred through heaven
Drives cloudrack o'er head;
Air soon shall be deep hued
With dying men's blood
When this our spædom
Comes speedy to pass.

So cheerily chant we
Charms for the young king,
Come maidens lift loudly
His warwinning lay;
Let him who now listens
Learn well with his ears,
And gladden brave swordsmen
With bursts of war's song.

Now mount we our horses,
Now bare we our brands,
Now haste we hard, maidens,
Hence far, far away.

Then they plucked down the woof and tore it asunder, and each kept what she had hold of.

Now Daurrud goes away from the slit, and home; but they got on their steeds and rode six to the south, and the other six to the north.

A like event befell Brand Gneisti's son in the Faroe Isles.

At Swinefell, in Iceland, blood came on the priest's stole on Good Friday, so that he had to put it off.

At Thvattwater the priest thought he saw on Good Friday a long deep of the sea hard by the altar, and there he saw many awful sights, and it was long ere he could sing the prayers.

This event happened in the Orkneys, that Hareck thought he saw Earl Sigurd, and some men with him. Then Hareck took his horse and rode to meet the Earl. Men saw that they met and rode under a brae, but they were never seen again, and not a scrap was ever found of Hareck.

Earl Gilli in the Southern Isles dreamed that a man came to him and said his name was Hostfinn, and told him he was come from Ireland.

The Earl thought he asked him for tidings thence, and then he sang this song—

I have been where warriors wrestled,
High in Erin sang the sword,
Boss to boss met many bucklers.
Steel rung sharp on rattling helm;
I can tell of all their struggle;
Sigurd fell in flight of spears;
Brian fell, but kept his kingdom
Ere he lost one drop of blood.

Those two, Flosi and the Earl, talked much of this dream. A week after, Hrafn the red came thither, and told them all the tidings of Brian's battle, the fall of the king, and of Earl Sigurd, and Brodir, and all the Vikings.

"What," said Flosi, "hast thou to tell me of my men?"

"They all fell there," says Hrafn, "but thy brother-in-law Thorstein took peace from Kerthialfard, and is now with him."

Flosi told the Earl that he would now go away, "for we have our pilgrimage south to fulfil."

The Earl bade him go as he wished, and gave him a ship and all else that he needed, and much silver.

Then they sailed to Wales, and stayed there a while.

CHAPTER CLVII. THE SLAYING OF KOL THORSTEIN'S SON.

Kari Solmund's son told master Skeggi that he wished he would get him a ship. So master Skeggi gave Kari a long-ship, fully trimmed and manned, and on board it went Kari, and David the white, and Kolbein the black.

Now Kari and his fellows sailed south through Scotland's Firths, and there they found men from the Southern Isles. They told Kari the tidings from Ireland, and also that Flosi was gone to Wales, and his men with him.

But when Kari heard that, he told his messmates that he would hold on south to Wales, to fall in with Flosi and his band. So he bade them then to part from his company, if they liked it better, and said that he would not wish to beguile any man into mischief, because he thought he had not yet had revenge enough on Flosi and his band.

All chose to go with him; and then he sails south to Wales, and there they lay in hiding in a creek out of the way.

That morning Kol Thorstein's son went into the town to buy silver. He of all the Burners had used the bitterest words. Kol had talked much with a mighty dame, and he had so knocked the nail on the head, that it was all but fixed that he was to have her, and settle down there.

That same morning Kari went also into the town. He came where Kol was telling the silver.

Kari knew him at once, and ran at him with his drawn sword and smote him on the neck; but he still went on telling the silver, and his head counted "ten" just as it spun off the body.

Then Kari said—

"Go and tell this to Flosi, that Kari Solmund's son hath slain Kol Thorstein's son. I give notice of this slaying as done by my hand."

Then Kari went to his ship, and told his shipmates of the manslaughter.

Then they sailed north to Beruwick, and laid up their ship, and fared up into Whitherne in Scotland, and were with Earl Malcolm that year.

But when Flosi heard of Kol's slaying, he laid out his body, and bestowed much money on his burial.

Flosi never uttered any wrathful words against Kari.

Thence Flosi fared south across the sea and began his pilgrimage, and went on south, and did not stop till he came to Rome. There he got so great honour that he took absolution from the Pope himself, and for that he gave a great sum of money.

Then he fared back again by the east road, and stayed long in towns, and went in before mighty men, and had from them great honour.

He was in Norway the winter after, and was with Earl Eric till he was ready to sail, and the Earl gave him much meal, and many other men behaved handsomely to him.

Now he sailed out to Iceland, and ran into Hornfirth, and thence fared home to Swinefell. He had then fulfilled all the terms of his atonement, both in fines and foreign travel.

CHAPTER CLVIII. OF FLOSI AND KARI.

Now it is to be told of Kari that the summer after he went down to his ship and sailed south across the sea, and began his pilgrimage in Normandy, and so went south and got absolution and fared back by the western way, and took his ship again in Normandy, and sailed in her north across the sea to Dover in England.

Thence he sailed west, round Wales, and so north, through Scotland's Firths, and did not stay his course till he came to Thraswick in Caithness, to master Skeggi's house.

There he gave over the ship of burden to Kolbein and David, and Kolbein sailed in that ship to Norway, but David stayed behind in the Fair Isle.

Kari was that winter in Caithness. In this winter his housewife died out in Iceland.

The next summer Kari busked him for Iceland. Skeggi gave him a ship of burden, and there were eighteen of them on board her.

They were rather late "boun," but still they put to sea, and had a long passage, but at last they made Ingolf's Head. There their shin was dashed all to pieces, but the men's lives were saved. Then, too, a gale of wind came on them.

Now they ask Kari what counsel was to be taken; but he said their best plan was to go to Swinefell and put Flosi's manhood to the proof.

So they went right up to Swinefell in the storm. Flosi was in the hall. He knew Kari as soon as ever he came into the hall, and sprang up to meet him, and kissed him, and sate him down in the high-seat by his side.

Flosi asked Kari to be there that winter, and Kari took his offer. Then they were atoned with a full atonement.

Then Flosi gave away his brother's daughter Hildigunna, whom Hauskuld the priest of Whiteness had had to wife, to Kari, and they dwelt first of all at Broadwater.

Men say that the end of Flosi's life was, that he fared abroad, when he had grown old, to seek for timber to build him a hall; and he was in Norway that winter, but the next summer he was late "boun"; and men told him that his ship was not seaworthy.

Flosi said she was quite good enough for an old and death-doomed man, and bore his goods on shipboard and put out to sea. But of that ship no tidings were ever heard.

These were the children of Kari Solmund's son and Helga Njal's daughter—Thorgerda and Ragneida, Valgerda, and Thord who was burnt in Njal's house. But the children of Hildigunna and Kari were these, Starkad, and Thord, and Flosi.

The son of Burning-Flosi was Kolbein, who has been the most famous man of any of that stock.

And here we end the STORY of BURNT NJAL.

Cormac's Saga

CHAPTER ONE. Cormac's Fore-Elders.

Harald Fairhair was king of Norway when this tale begins. There was a chief in the kingdom in those days and his name was Cormac; one of the Vik-folk by kindred, a great man of high birth. He was the mightiest of champions, and had been with King Harald in many battles.

He had a son called Ogmund, a very hopeful lad; big and sturdy even as a child; who when he was grown of age and come to his full strength, took to sea-roving in summer and served in the king's household in winter. So he earned for himself a good name and great riches.

One summer he went roving about the British Isles and there he fell in with a man named Asmund Ashenside, who also was a great champion and had worsted many vikings and men of war. These two heard tell of one another and challenges passed between them. They came together and fought. Asmund had the greater following, but he withheld some of his men from the battle: and so for the length of four days they fought, until many of Asmund's people were fallen, and at last he himself fled. Ogmund won the victory and came home again with wealth and worship.

His father said that he could get no greater glory in war,—“And now,” said he, “I will find thee a wife. What sayest thou to Helga, daughter of Earl Frodi?”

“So be it,” said Ogmund.

Upon this they set off to Earl Frodi's house, and were welcomed with all honour. They made known their errand, and he took it kindly, although he feared that the fight with Asmund was likely to bring trouble. Nevertheless this match was made, and then they went their ways home. A feast was got ready for the wedding and to that feast a very great company came together.

Helga the daughter of Earl Frodi had a nurse that was a wise woman, and she went with her. Now Asmund the viking heard of this marriage, and set out to meet Ogmund. He bade him fight, and Ogmund agreed.

Helga's nurse used to touch men when they went to fight: so she did with Ogmund before he set out from home, and told him that he would not be hurt much.

Then they both went to the fighting holm and fought. The viking laid bare his side, but the sword would not bite upon it. Then Ogmund whirled about his sword swiftly and shifted it from hand to hand, and hewed Asmund's leg from under him: and three marks of gold he took to let him go with his life.

CHAPTER TWO. How Cormac Was Born and Bred.

About this time King Harald Fairhair died, and Eric Bloodaxe reigned in his stead. Ogmund would have no friendship with Eric, nor with Gunnhild, and made ready his ship for Iceland.

Nor Ogmund and Helga had a son called Frodi: but when the ship was nearly ready, Helga took a sickness and died; and so did their son Frodi.

After that, they sailed to sea. When they were near the land, Ogmund cast overboard his high-seat-pillars; and where the high-seat-pillars had already been washed ashore, there they cast anchor, and landed in Midfjord.

At this time Skeggi of Midfjord ruled the countryside. He came riding toward them and bade them welcome into the firth, and

gave them the pick of the land: which Ogmund took, and began to mark out ground for a house. Now it was a belief of theirs that as the measuring went, so would the luck go: if the measuring-wand seemed to grow less when they tried it again and again, so would that house's luck grow less: and if it grew greater, so would the luck be. This time the measure always grew less, though they tried it three times over.

So Ogmund built him a house on the sandhills, and lived there ever after. He married Dalla, the daughter of Onund the Seer, and their sons were Thorgils and Cormac. Cormac was dark-haired, with a curly lock upon his forehead: he was bright of blee and somewhat like his mother, big and strong, and his mood was rash and hasty. Thorgils was quiet and easy to deal with.

When the brothers were grown up, Ogmund died; and Dalla kept house with her sons. Thorgils worked the farm, under the eye of Midfjord-Skeggi.

CHAPTER THREE. How Cormac Fell In Love.

There was a man named Thorkel lived at Tunga (Tongue). He was a wedded man, and had a daughter called Steingerd who was fostered in Gnupsdal (Knipedale).

Now it was one autumn that a whale came ashore at Vatnsnes (Watsness), and it belonged to the brothers, Dalla's sons. Thorgils asked Cormac would he rather go shepherding on the fell, or work at the whale. He chose to fare on the fell with the house-carles.

Tosti, the foreman, it was should be master of the sheep-gathering: so he and Cormac went together until they came to Gnupsdal. It was night: there was a great hall, and fires for men to sit at.

That evening Steingerd came out of her bower, and a maid with her. Said the maid, “Steingerd mine, let us look at the guests.”

“Nay,” she said, “no need”: and yet went to the door, and stepped on the threshold, and spied across the gate. Now there was a space between the wicker and the threshold, and her feet showed through. Cormac saw that, and made this song:—

At the door of my soul she is standing,
So sweet in the gleam of her garment:
Her footfall awakens a fury,
A fierceness of love that I knew not,
Those feet of a wench in her wimple,
Their weird is my sorrow and troubling,
Or naught may my knowledge avail me
Both now and for aye to endure.

Then Steingerd knew she was seen. She turned aside into a corner where the likeness of Hagbard was carved on the wall, and peeped under Hagbard's beard. Then the firelight shone upon her face.

“Cormac,” said Tosti, “seest eyes out yonder by that head of Hagbard?”

Cormac answered in song:—

There breaks on me, burning upon me,
A blaze from the cheeks of a maiden,
I laugh not to look on the vision
In the light of the hall by the doorway.
So sweet and so slender I deem her,
Though I spy but a glimpse of an ankle
By the threshold: and through me there flashes
A thrill that shall age never more.

And then he made another song:—

The moon of her brow, it is beaming
 Neath the bright-litten heaven of her forehead:
 So she gleams in her white robe, and gazes
 With a glance that is keen as the falcon's.
 But the star that is shining upon me
 What spell shall it work by its witchcraft?
 Ah, that moon of her brow shall be mighty
 With mischief to her and to me.

Said Tosti, "She is fairly staring at thee!"—And he answered:—

She's a ring-bedight oak of the ale-cup,
 And her eyes never left me unhaunted.
 The strife in my heart I could hide not,
 For I hold myself bound in her bondage.
 O gay in her necklet, and gainer
 In the game that wins hearts on her chessboard,
 When she looked at me long from the doorway
 Where the likeness of Hagbard is carved.

Then the girls went into the hall, and sat down. He heard what they said about his looks,—the maid, that he was black and ugly, and Steingerd, that he was handsome and everyway as best could be,—"There is only one blemish," said she, "his hair is tufted on his forehead:"—and he said:—

One flaw in my features she noted
 With the flame of the wave she was gleaming
 All white in the wane of the twilight
 And that one was no hideous blemish.
 So highborn, so haughty a lady
 I should have such a dame to befriend me:
 But she throws me uncouth for a trifle,
 For a tuft in the hair on my brow!

Said the maid, "Black are his eyes, sister, and that becomes him not." Cormac heard her, and said in verse:—

Yes, black are the eyes that I bring ye,
 O brave in your jewels, and dainty.
 But a draggel-tail, dirty-foot slattern
 Would dub me ill-favoured and sallow.
 Nay, many a maiden has loved me,
 Thou may of the glittering armet:
 For I've tricks of the tongue to beguile them
 And turn them from handsomer lads.

At this house they spent the night. In the morning when Cormac rose up, he went to a trough and washed himself; then he went into the ladies' bower and saw nobody there, but heard folk talking in the inner room, and he turned and entered. There was Steingerd, and women with her.

Said the maid to Steingerd, "There comes thy bonny man, Steingerd."

"Well, and a fine-looking lad he is," said she.

Now she was combing her hair, and Cormac asked her, "Wilt thou give me leave?"

She reached out her comb for him to handle it. She had the finest hair of any woman. Said the maid, "Ye would give a deal for a wife with hair like Steingerd's, or such eyes!"

He answered:—

One eye of the far of the ale-horn
 Looking out of a form so bewitching,
 Would a bridegroom count money to buy it
 He must bring for it ransom three hundred.
 The curls that she combs of a morning,
 White-clothed in fair linen and spotless,
 They enhance the bright hoard of her value,
 Five hundred might barely redeem them!

Said the maid, "It's give and take with the two of ye! But thou'lt put a big price upon the whole of her!" He answered:—

The tree of my treasure and longing,
 It would take this whole Iceland to win her:
 She is dearer than far-away Denmark,
 And the doughty domain of the Hun-folk.
 With the gold she is combing, I count her
 More costly than England could ransom:
 So witty, so wealthy, my lady
 Is worth them, and Ireland beside!

Then Tosti came in, and called Cormac out to some work or other; but he said:—

Take my swift-footed steel for thy tiding,
 Ay, and stint not the lash to him, Tosti:
 On the desolate downs ye may wander
 And drive him along till he weary.

I care not over mountain and moorland
 The murrey-brown weathers to follow,
 Far liefer, I'd linger the morning
 In long, cosy chatter with Steingerd.

Tosti said he would find it a merrier game, and went off; so Cormac sat down to chess, and right gay he was. Steingerd said he talked better than folk told of; and he sat there all the day; and then he made this song:—

'Tis the dart that adorneth her tresses,
 The deep, dewy grass of her forehead.
 So kind to my keeping she gave it,
 That good comb I shall ever remember!
 A stranger was I when I sought her
 Sweet stem with the dragon's hoard shining.
 With gold like the sea-dazzle gleaming,
 The girl I shall never forget.

Tosti came off the fell and they fared home. After that Cormac used to go to Gnupsdal often to see Steingerd: and he asked his mother to make him good clothes, so that Steingerd might like him the most that could be. Dalla said there was a mighty great difference betwixt them, and it was far from certain to end happily if Thorkel at Tunga got to know.

CHAPTER FOUR. How Cormac Liked Black-Puddings.

Well Thorkel soon heard what was going forward, and thought it would turn out to his own shame and his daughter's if Cormac would not pledge himself to take her or leave her. So he sent for Steingerd, and she went home.

Thorkel had a man called Narfi, a noisy, foolish fellow, boastful, and yet of little account. Said he to Thorkel, "If Cormac's coming likes thee not, I can soon settle it."

"Very well," says Thorkel.

Now, in the autumn, Narfi's work it was to slaughter the sheep. Once, when Cormac came to Tunga, he saw Steingerd in the kitchen. Narfi stood by the kettle, and when they had finished the boiling, he took up a black-pudding and thrust it under Cormac's nose, crying:—

Cormac, how would ye relish one?
 Kettle-worms I call them.

To which he answered:—

Black-puddings boiled, quoth Ogmund's son,
 Are a dainty, fair befell them!

And in the evening when Cormac made ready to go home he saw Narfi, and bethought him of those churlish words. "I think, Narfi," said he, "I am more like to knock thee down, than thou to rule my coming and going." And with that struck him an axe-hammer-blow, saying:—

Why foul with thy clowning and folly,
 The food that is dressed for thy betters.
 Thou blundering archer, what ails thee
 To be aiming thy insults at me?

And he made another song about:—

He asked me, the clavering cowerd
 If I cared for what was it he called them,
 The worms of the kettle. I warrant
 He'll be wiping his eyes by the hearth-stone.
 I deem that yon knave of the dunghill
 Who dabbles the muck on the meadow
 Yon rook in his mud-spattered raiment
 Got a rap for his noise like a dog.

CHAPTER FIVE. They Waylay Cormac: And The Witch Curses Him.

There was a woman named Thorveig, and she knew a deal too much. She lived at Steins-stadir (Stonestead) in Midfjord, and had two sons; the elder was Odd, and the younger Gudmund. They were great braggarts both of them.

This Odd often came to see Thorkel at Tunga, and used to sit and talk with Steingerd. Thorkel made a great show of friendship with the brothers, and egged them on to waylay Cormac. Odd said it was no more than he could do.

So one day when Cormac came to Tunga, Steingerd was in the parlour and sat on the dais. Thorveig's sons sat in the room, ready to fall upon him when he came in; and Thorkel had put a drawn sword on one side of the door, and on the other side Narfi had put a scythe in its shaft. When Cormac came to the hall-door the scythe fell down and met the sword, and broke a great notch in it. Out came Thorkel and began to upbraid Cormac for a rascal, and got fairly wild with his talk: then flung into the parlour and bade Steingerd out of it. Forth they went by another door, and he locked her into an outhouse, saying that Cormac and she would never meet again.

Cormac went in: and he came quicker than folk thought for, and they were taken aback. He looked about, and no Steingerd: but he saw the brothers whetting their weapons: so he turned on his heel and went, saying:—

The weapon that mows in the meadow
It met with the gay painted buckler,
When I came to encounter a goddess
Who carries the beaker of wine.
Beware! for I warn you of evil
When warriors threaten me mischief.
It shall not be for nought that I pour ye
The newly mixed mead of the gods.

And when he could find Steingerd nowhere, he made this song:—

She has gone, with the glitter of ocean
Agleam on her wrist and her bosom,
And my heart follows hard on her footsteps,
For the hall is in darkness without her.
I have gazed, but my glances can pierce not
The gloom of the desolate dwelling;
And fierce is my longing to find her,
The fair one who only can heal me.

After a while he came to the outhouse where Steingerd was, and burst it open and had talk with her.

"This is madness," cried she, "to come talking with me; for Thorveig's sons are meant to have thy head."

But he answered:—

There wait they within that would snare me;
There whet they their swords for my slaying.
My bane they shall be not, the cowards,
The brood of the churl and the carline.
Let the twain of them find me and fight me
In the field, without shelter to shield them,
And ewes of the sheep should be surer
To shorten the days of the wolf.

So he sat there all day. By that time Thorkel saw that the plan he had made was come to nothing; and he bade the sons of Thorveig waylay Cormac in a dale near his garth. "Narfi shall go with ye two," said he; "but I will stay at home, and bring you help if need be."

In the evening Cormac set out, and when he came to the dale, he saw three men, and said in verse:—

There sit they in hiding to stay me
From the sight of my queen of the jewels:
But rude will their task be to reave me
From the roof of my bounteous lady.
The fairer the hatred they harbour
For him that is free of her doorway,
The fairer my love and my longing
For the lass that is sweeter than samphire.

Then leaped up Thorveig's sons, and fought Cormac for a time: Narfi the while skulked and dodged behind them. Thorkel saw from his house that they were getting but slowly forward, and he took his weapons. In that nick of time Steingerd came out and saw what her father meant. She laid hold on his hands, and he got no nearer to help the brothers. In the end Odd fell, and Gudmund was so wounded that he died afterwards. Thorkel saw to them, and Cormac went home.

A little after this Cormac went to Thorveig and said he would have her no longer live there at the firth. "Thou shalt flit and go thy way at such a time," said he, "and I will give no blood-money for thy sons."

Thorveig answered, "It is like enough ye can hunt me out of the countryside, and leave my sons unatoned. But this way I'll reward thee. Never shalt thou have Steingerd."

Said Cormac, "That's not for thee to make or to mar, thou wicked old hag!"

CHAPTER SIX. Cormac Wins His Bride and Loses Her.

After this, Cormac went to see Steingerd the same as ever: and once when they talked over these doings she said no ill of them: whereupon he made this song:—

There sat they in hiding to slay me
From the sight of my bride and my darling:
But weak were the feet of my foemen
When we fought on the island of weapons.
And the rush of the mightiest rivers
Shall race from the shore to the mountains
Or ever I leave thee, my lady,
And the love that I feast on to-day!

"Say no such big words about it," answered she; "Many a thing may stand in the road."

Upon which he said:—

O sweet in the sheen of thy raiment,
The sight of thy beauty is gladdening!
What man that goes marching to battle,
What mate wouldst thou choose to be thine?

And she answered:—

O giver of gold, O ring-breaker,
If the gods and the high fates befriend me,
I'd pledge me to Frodi's blithe brother
And bind him that he should be mine.

Then she told him to make friends with her father and get her in marriage. So for her sake Cormac gave Thorkel good gifts. Afterwards many people had their say in the matter; but in the end it came to this,—that he asked for her, and she was pledged to him, and the wedding was fixed: and so all was quiet for a while.

Then they had words. There was some falling-out about settlements. It came to such a pass that after everything was ready, Cormac began to cool off. But the real reason was, that Thorveig had bewitched him so that they should never have one another.

Thorkel at Tunga had a grown-up son, called Thorkel and by-named Tooth-gnasher. He had been abroad some time, but this summer he came home and stayed with his father.

Cormac never came to the wedding at the time it was fixed, and the hour passed by. This the kinsfolk of Steingerd thought a slight, deeming that he had broken off the match; and they had much talk about it.

CHAPTER SEVEN. How Steingerd Was Married To Somebody Else.

Bersi lived in the land of Saurbae, a rich man and a good fellow: he was well to the fore, a fighter, and a champion at the holmgang. He had been married to Finna the Fair: but she was dead: Asmund was their son, young in years and early ripe. Helga was the sister of Bersi: she was unmarried, but a fine woman and a pushing one, and she kept house for Bersi after Finna died.

At the farm called Muli (the Mull) lived Thord Arndisaron: he was wedded to Thordis, sister of Bork the Stout. They had two sons who were both younger than Asmund the son of Bersi.

There was also a man with Vali. His farm was named Vali's stead, and it stood on the way to Hrutafjord.

Now Thorveig the spawwife went to see Holmgang Bersi and told him her trouble. She said that Cormac forbade her staying in Midfjord: so Bersi bought land for her west of the firth, and she lived there for a long time afterwards.

Once when Thorkel at Tunga and his son were talking about Cormac's breach of faith and deemed that it should be avenged, Narfi said, "I see a plan that will do. Let us go to the west-country with plenty of goods and gear, and come to Bersi in Saurbae. He is wifeless. Let us entangle him in the matter. He would be a great help to us."

That counsel they took. They journeyed to Saurbae, and Bersi welcomed them. In the evening they talked of nothing but weddings. Narfi up and said there was no match so good as Steingerd,—“And a deal of folk say, Bersi, that she would suit thee.”

"I have heard tell," he answered, "that there will be a rift in the road, though the match is a good one."

"If it's Cormac men fear," cried Narfi, "there is no need; for he is clean out of the way."

When Bersi heard that, he opened the matter to Thorkel Toothgnasher, and asked for Steingerd. Thorkel made a good answer, and pledged his sister to him.

So they rode north, eighteen in all, for the wedding. There was a man named Vigi lived at Holm, a big man and strong of his hands, a warlock, and Bersi's kinsman. He went with them, and they thought he would be a good helper. Thord Arndisarson too went north with Bersi, and many others, all picked men.

When they came to Thorkel's, they set about the wedding at once, so that no news of it might get out through the countryside: but all this was sore against Steingerd's will.

Now Vigi the warlock knew every man's affairs who came to the steading or left it. He sat outmost in the chamber, and slept by the hall door.

Steingerd sent for Narfi, and when they met she said,—*"I wish thee, kinsman, to tell Cormac the business they are about: I wish thee to take this message to him."*

So he set out secretly; but when he was a gone a little way Vigi came after, and bade him creep home and hatch no plots. They went back together, and so the night passed.

Next morning Narfi started forth again; but before he had gone so far as on the evening, Vigi beset him, and drove him back without mercy.

When the wedding was ended they made ready for their journey. Steingerd took her gold and jewels, and they rode towards Hrutfiord, going rather slowly. When they were off, Narfi set out and came to Mel. Cormac was building a wall, and hammering it with a mallet. Narfi rode up, with his shield and sword, and carried on strangely, rolling his eyes about like a hunted beast. Some men were up on the wall with Cormac when he came, and his horse shied at them. Said Cormac,—*"What news, Narfi? What folk were with you last night?"*

"Small tidings, but we had guests enough," answered he.

"Who were the guests?"

"There was Holmgang Bersi, with seventeen more to sit at his wedding."

"Who was the bride?"

"Bersi wed Steingerd Thorkel's daughter," said Narfi. *"When they were gone she sent me here to tell thee the news."*

"Thou hast never a word but ill," said Cormac, and leapt upon him and struck at the shield: and as it slipped aside he was smitten on the breast and fell from his horse; and the horse ran away with the shield (hanging to it).

Cormac's brother Thorgils said this was too much. *"It serves him right,"* cried Cormac. And when Narfi woke out of his swoon they got speech of him.

Thorgils asked, *"What manner of men were at the wedding?"*

Narfi told him.

"Did Steingerd know this before?"

"Not till the very evening they came," answered he; and then told of his dealings with Vigi, saying that Cormac would find it easier to whistle on Steingerd's tracks and go on a fool's errand than to fight Bersi. Then said Cormac:—

Now see to thy safety henceforward,
And stick to thy horse and thy buckler;
Or this mallet of mine, I can tell thee,
Will meet with thine ear of a surety.
Now say no more stories of feasting,
Though seven in a day thou couldst tell of,
Or bumps thou shalt comb on thy brainpan,
Thou that breakest the howes of the dead.

Thorgils asked about the settlements between Bersi and Steingerd. Her kinsmen, said Narfi, were now quit of all farther trouble about that business, however it might turn out; but her father and brother would be answerable for the wedding.

CHAPTER EIGHT. How Cormac Chased Bersi And His Bride.

Cormac took his horse and weapons and saddle-gear. *"What now, brother?"* asked Thorgils.

He answered:—

My bride, my betrothed has been stolen,
And Bersi the raider has robbed me.
I who offer the song-cup of Odin,
Who else should be riding beside her.
She loved me no lord of them better:
I have lost her, for me she is weeping:
The dear, dainty darling that kissed me,
For day upon day of delight.

Said Thorgils, *"A risky errand is this, for Bersi will get home before you catch him. And yet I will go with thee."*

Cormac said he would away and bide for no man. He leapt on his horse forthwith, and galloped as hard as he could. Thorgils made haste to gather men,—they were eighteen in all,—and came up with Cormac on the hause that leads to Hrutfiord, for he had foundered his horse. So they turned to Thorveig the spæwife's farmsteading, and found that Bersi was gone aboard her boat.

She had said to Bersi, *"I wish thee to take a little gift from me, and good luck follow it."*

This was a target bound with iron; and she said she reckoned Bersi would hardly be hurt if he carried it to shield him,—*"but it is little worth beside this steading thou hast given me."* He thanked her for the gift, and so they parted. Then she got men to scuttle all the boats on the shore, because she knew beforehand that Cormac and his folk were coming.

When they came and asked her for a boat, she said she would do them no kindness without payment;—*"Here is a rotten boat in the boathouse which I would lend for half a mark."*

Thorgils said it would be in reason if she asked two ounces of silver. Such matters, said Cormac, should not stand in the way; but Thorgils said he would sooner ride all round the water-head. Nevertheless Cormac had his will, and they started in the boat; but they had scarcely put off from shore when it filled, and they had hard work to get back to the same spot.

"Thou shouldst pay dearly for this, thou wicked old hag," said Cormac, *"and never be paid at all."*

That was no mighty trick to play them, she said; and so Thorgils paid her the silver; about which Cormac made this song:—

I'm a tree that is tricked out in war-gear,
She, the trim rosy elf of the shuttle:
And I break into singing about her
Like the bat at the well, never ceasing.
With the dew-drops of Draupnir the golden
Full dearly folk buy them their blessings;
Then lay down three ounces and leave them
For the leaky old boat that we borrowed.

Bersi got hastily to horse, and rode homewards; and when Cormac saw that he must be left behind, he made this song:—

I tell you, the goddess who glitters
With gold on the perch of the falcon,
The bride that I trusted, by beauty,
From the bield of my hand has been taken.
On the boat she makes glad in its gliding
She is gone from me, reft from me, ravished!
O shame, that we linger to save her,
Too sweet for the prey of the raven!

They took their horses and rode round the head of the firth. They met Vali and asked about Bersi; he said that Bersi had come to Muli and gathered men to him,—*"A many men."*

"Then we are too late," said Cormac, *"if they have got men together."*

Thorgils begged Cormac to let them turn back, saying there was little honour to be got; but Cormac said he must see Steingerd.

So Vali went with them and they came to Muli where Bersi was and many men with him. They spoke together. Cormac said that Bersi had betrayed him in carrying off Steingerd, *"But now we would take the lady with us, and make him amends for his honour."*

To this said Thord Arndisarson, *"We will offer terms to Cormac, but the lady is in Bersi's hands."*

"There is no hope that Steingerd will go with you," said Bersi; "but I offer my sister to Cormac in marriage, and I reckon he will be well wedded if take Helga."

"This is a good offer," said Thorgils; "let us think of it, brother." But Cormac started back like a restive horse.

CHAPTER NINE. Of Another Witch, And Two Magic Swords.

There was a woman called Thordis—and a shrew she was—who lived at Spakonufell (Spaequean's-fell), in Skagastrand. She, having foresight of Cormac's goings, came that very day to Muli, and answered this matter on his behalf, saying, "Never give him yon false woman. She is a fool, and not fit for any pretty man. Woe will his mother be at such a fate for her lad!"

"Aroint thee, foul witch!" cried Thord. They should see, said he, that Helga would turn out fine. But Cormac answered, "Said it may be, for sooth it may be: I will never think of her."

"Woe to us, then," said Thorgils, "for listening to the words of yon fiend, and slighting this offer!"

Then spoke Cormac, "I bid thee, Bersi, to the holmgang within half a month, at Leidholm, in Middel."

Bersi said he would come, but Cormac should be the worse for his choice.

After this Cormac went about the stading to look for Steingerd. When he found her he said she had betrayed him in marrying another man.

"It was thou that made the first breach, Cormac," said she, "for this was none of my doing."

Then said he in verse:—

Thou sayest my faith has been forfeit,
O fair in thy glittering raiment;
But I wearied my steed and outwore it,
And for what but the love that bare thee?
O fairer by far was I, lady,
To founder my horse in the hunting.
Nay, I spared not the jade when I spurred it,
Than to see thee the bride of my foe.

After this Cormac and his men went home. When he told his mother how things had gone, "Little good," she said, "will thy luck do us. Ye have slighted a fine offer, and you have no chance against Bersi, for he is a great fighter and he has good weapons."

Now, Bersi owned the sword they call Whitting; a sharp sword it was, with a life-stone to it; and that sword he had carried in many a fray.

"Whether wilt thou have weapons to meet Whitting?" she asked. Cormac said he would have an axe both great and keen.

Dalla said he should see Skeggi of Midfjord and ask for the loan of his sword, Skofnung. So Cormac went to Reykir and told Skeggi how matters stood, asking him to lend the sword. Skeggi said he had no mind to lend it. Skofnung and Cormac, said he, would never agree: "It is cold and slow, and thou art hot and hasty."

Cormac rode away and liked it ill. He came home to Mel and told his mother that Skeggi would not lend the sword. Now Skeggi had the oversight of Dalla's affairs, and they were great friends; so she said, "He will lend the sword, though not all at once."

That was not what he wanted, answered Cormac,—"If he withhold it not from thee, while he does withhold it from me." Upon which she answered that he was a thwart lad.

A few days afterwards Dalla told him to go to Reykir. "He will lend thee the sword now," said she. So he sought Skeggi and asked for Skofnung.

"Hard wilt thou find it to handle," said Skeggi. "There is a pouch to it, and that thou shalt let be. Sun must not shine on the pommel of the hilt. Thou shalt not wear it until fighting is forward, and when ye come to the field, sit all alone and then draw it. Hold the edge toward thee, and blow on it. Then will a little worm creep from under the hilt. Then slope thou the sword over, and make it easy for that worm to creep back beneath the hilt."

"Here's a tale of tricks, thou warlock!" cried Cormac

"Nevertheless," answered Skeggi, "it will stand thee in good stead to know them."

So Cormac rode home and told his mother, saying that her will was of great avail with Skeggi. He showed the sword, and tried to draw it, but it would not leave the sheath.

"Thou art over wilful, my son," said she.

Then he set his feet against the hilts, and pulled until he tore the pouch off, at which Skofnung creaked and groaned, but never came out of the scabbard.

Well, the time wore on, and the day came. He rode away with fifteen men; Bersi also rode to the holm with as many. Cormac came there first, and told Thorgils that he would sit apart by himself. So he sat down and ungirt the sword.

Now, he never heeded whether the sun shone upon the hilt, for he had girt the sword on him outside his clothes. And when he tried to draw it he could not, until he set his feet upon the hilts. Then the little worm came, and was not rightly done by; and so the sword came groaning and creaking out of the scabbard, and the good luck of it was gone.

CHAPTER TEN. The Fight On Leidarholm.

After that Cormac went to his men. Bersi and his party had come by that time, and many more to see the fight.

Cormac took up Bersi's target and cut at it, and sparks flew out.

Then a hide was taken and spread for them to stand on. Bersi spoke and said, "Thou, Cormac, hast challenged me to the holmgang; instead of that, I offer thee to fight in simple sword-play. Thou art a young man and little tried; the holmgang needs craft and cunning, but sword-play, man to man, is an easy game."

Cormac answered, "I should fight no better even so. I will run the risk, and stand on equal footing with thee, every way."

"As thou wilt," said Bersi.

It was the law of the holmgang that the hide should be five ells long, with loops at its corners. Into these should be driven certain pins with heads to them, called tjosnur. He who made it ready should go to the pins in such a manner that he could see sky between his legs, holding the lobes of his ears and speaking the forewords used in the rite called "The Sacrifice of the tjosnur." Three squares should be marked round the hide, each one foot broad. At the outermost corners of the squares should be four poles, called hazels; when this is done, it is a hazelled field. Each man should have three shields, and when they were cut up he must get upon the hide if he had given way from it before, and guard himself with his weapons alone thereafter. He who had been challenged should strike the first stroke. If one was wounded so that blood fell upon the hide, he should fight no longer. If either set one foot outside the hazel poles "he went on his heel," they said; but he "ran" if both feet were outside. His own man was to hold the shield before each of the fighters. The one who was wounded should pay three marks of silver to be set free.

So the hide was taken and spread under their feet. Thorgils held his brother's shield, and Thord Arndisarsen that of Bersi. Bersi struck the first blow, and cleft Cormac's shield; Cormac struck at Bersi to the like peril. Each of them cut up and spoilt three shields of the other's. Then it was Cormac's turn. He struck at Bersi, who parried with Whitting. Skofnung cut the point off Whitting in front of the ridge. The sword-point flew upon Cormac's hand, and he was wounded in the thumb. The joint was cleft, and blood dropped upon the hide. Thereupon folk went between them and stayed the fight.

Then said Cormac, "This is a mean victory that Bersi has gained; it is only from my bad luck; and yet we must part."

He flung down his sword, and it met Bersi's target. A shard was broken out of Skofnung, and fire flew out of Thorveig's gift.

Bersi asked the money for release, Cormac said it would be paid; and so they parted.

CHAPTER ELEVEN. The Songs That Were Made About The Fight.

Steinar was the name of a man who was the son of Onund the Seer, and brother of Dalla, Cormac's mother. He was an unpeaceful man, and lived at Ellidi.

Thither rode Cormac from the holme, to see his kinsman, and told him of the fight, at which he was but ill pleased. Cormac

said he meant to leave the country,—“And I want thee to take the money to Bersi.”

“Thou art no bold man,” said Steinar, “but the money shall be paid if need be.”

Cormac was there some nights; his hand swelled much, for it was not dressed.

After that meeting, Holmgang Bersi went to see his brother. Folk asked how the holmgang had gone, and when he told them they said that two bold men had struck small blows, and he had gained the victory only through Cormac’s mishap. When Bersi met Steingerd, and she asked how it went, he made this verse:—

They call him, and truly they tell it,
A tree of the helmet right noble:
But the master of manhood must bring me
Three marks for his ransom and rescue.
Though stout in the storm of the bucklers
In the stress of the Valkyrie’s tempest
He will bid me no more to the battle,
For the best of the struggle was ours.

Steinar and Cormac rode from Ellidi and passed through Saurbae. They saw men riding towards them, and yonder came Bersi. He greeted Cormac and asked how the wound was getting on. Cormac said it needed little to be healed.

“Wilt thou let me heal thee?” said Bersi; “though from me thou didst get it: and then it will be soon over”

Cormac said nay, for he meant to be his lifelong foe. Then answered Bersi:—

Thou wilt mind thee for many a season
How we met in the high voice of Hilda.
Right fain I go forth to the spear-mote
Being fitted for every encounter.
There Cormac’s gay shield from his clutches
Iclave with the bane of the bucklers,
For he scorned in the battle to seek me
If we set not the lists of the holmgang.

Thus they parted; and then Cormac went home to Mel and saw his mother. She healed his hand; it had become ugly and healed badly. The notch in Skofnung they whetted, but the more they whetted the bigger it was. So he went to Reykir, and flung Skofnung at Skeggi’s feet, with this verse:—

I bring thee, thus broken and edgeless,
The blade that thou gavest me, Skeggi!
I warrant thy weapon could bite not:
I won not the fight by its witchcraft.
No gain of its virtue nor glory
I got in the strife of the weapons,
When we met for to mangle the sword-storm
For the maiden my singing adorns.

Said Skeggi, “It went as I warned thee.” Cormac flung forth and went home to Mel: and when he met with Dalla he made this song:—

To the field went I forth, O my mother
The flame of the armet who guardest,
To dare the cave-dweller, my foe-man
And I deemed I should smite him in battle.
But the brand that is bruited in story
It brake in my hand as I held it;
And this that should thrust men to slaughter
Is thwarted and let of its might.
For I borrowed to bear in the fighting
No blunt-edged weapon of Skeggi:
There is strength in the serpent that quivers
By the side of the land of the girdle.
But vain was the virtue of Skofnung
When he vanquished the sharpness of Whitting;
And a shard have I shorn, to my sorrow,
From the shearer of ringleted mail.
Yon tusker, my foe, wrought me trouble
When targe upon targe I had carven:
For the thin wand of slaughter was shattered
And it sundered the ground of my handgrip.
Loud bellowed the bear of the sea-king
When he brake from his lair in the scabbard,
At the hest of the singer, who seeketh
The sweet hidden draught of the gods.
Afar must I fare, O my mother,
And a fate points the pathway before me,
For that white-wreathen tree may woo not
Two wearisome morrows her outcast.
And it slays me, at home to be sitting,

So set is my heart on its goddess,
As a lawn with fair linen made lovely
I can linger no third morrow’s morn.

After that, Cormac went one day to Reykir and talked with Skeggi, who said the holmgang had been brought to scorn. Then answered Cormac:—

Forget it, O Frey of the helmet,
Lo, I frame thee a song in atonement
That the bringer of blood, even Skofnung,
I bare thee so strangely belated.
For by stirrers of storm was I wounded;
They smote me where perches the falcon:
But the blade that I borrowed, O Skeggi,
Was borne in the clashing of edges.
I had deemed, O thou Grey of fighting,
Of the fierce song of Odin, my neighbour,
I had deemed that a brand meet for bloodshed
I bare to the crossways of slaughter.
Nay, thy glaive, it would gape not nor ravine
Against him, the rover who robbed me:
And on her, as the surge on the shingle,
My soul beats and breaks evermore.

CHAPTER TWELVE. Bersi’s Bad Luck At The Thor’s-Ness Thing.

In the winter, sports were held at Saurbae. Bersi’s lad, Asmund, was there, and likewise the sons of Thord; but they were younger than he, and nothing like so sturdy. When they wrestled Asmund took no heed to stint his strength, and the sons of Thord often came home blue and bleeding. Their mother Thordis was ill pleased, and asked her husband would he give Bersi a hint to make it up on behalf of his son. Nay, Thord answered, he was loath to do that.

“Then I’ll find my brother Bork,” said she, “and it will be just as bad in the end.”

Thord bade her do no such thing. “I would rather talk it over with him,” said he; and so, at her wish, he met Bersi, and hinted that some amends were owing.

Said Bersi, “Thou art far too greedy of getting, nowadays. This kind of thing will end in losing thee thy good name. Thou wilt never want while anything is to be got here.”

Thord went home, and there was a coolness between them while that winter lasted.

Spring slipped by, until it was time for the meeting at Thor’s-ness. By then, Bersi thought he saw through this claim of Thord’s, and found Thordis at the bottom of it. For all that, he made ready to go to the Thing. By old use and wont these two neighbours should have gone riding together; so Bersi set out and came to Muli, but when he got there Thord was gone.

“Well,” said he, “Thord has broken old use and wont in awaiting me no longer.”

“If breach there be,” answered Thordis, “it is thy doing. This is nothing to what we owe thee, and I doubt there will be more to follow.”

They had words. Bersi said that harm would come of her evil counsel; and so they parted.

When he left the house he said to his men, “Let us turn aside to the shore and take a boat; it is a long way to ride round the waterhead.” So they took a boat—it was one of Thord’s—and went their way.

They came to the meeting when most other folks were already there, and went to the tent of Olaf Peacock of Hjardarholt (Herdholt), for he was Bersi’s chief. It was crowded inside, and Bersi found no seat. He used to sit next Thord, but that place was filled. In it there sat a big and strong-looking man, with a bear-skin coat, and a hood that shaded his face. Bersi stood a while before him, but the seat was not given up. He asked the man for his name, and was told he might call him Bruin, or he might call him Hoodie—which-ever he liked; whereupon he said in verse:—

Who sits in the seat of the warriors,
With the skin of the bear wrapped around him,
So wild in his look. Ye have welcomed
A wolf to your table, good kinsfolk!
Ah, now may I know him, I reckon!
Doth he name himself Bruin, or Hoodie?
We shall meet once again in the morning,
And maybe he’ll prove to be Steinar.

"And it's no use for thee to hide thy name, thou in the bearskin," said he.

"No more it is," he answered. "Steinar I am, and I have brought money to pay thee for Cormac, if so be it is needed. But first I bid thee to fight. It will have to be seen whether thou get the two marks of silver, or whether thou lose them both."

Upon which quoth Bersi:—

They that waken the storm of the spear-points
For slaughter and strife they are famous.
To the island they bid me for battle,
Nor bitter I think it nor woeful;
For long in that craft am I learned
To loosen the Valkyrie's tempest
In the lists, and I fear not to fight them,
Unflinching in battle am I.

"Well I wot, though," said he, "that ye and your gang mean to make away with me. But I would let you know that I too have something to say about it—something that will set down your swagger, maybe."

"It is not thy death we are seeking," answered Steinar; "all we want is to teach thee thy true place."

Bersi agreed to fight him, and then went out to a tent apart and took up his abode there.

Now one day the word went round for bathing in the sea. Said Steinar to Bersi, "Wilt try a race with me, Bersi?"

"I have given over swimming," said he, "and yet I'll try."

Bersi's manner of swimming was to breast the waves and strike out with all his might. In so doing he showed a charm he wore round his neck. Steinar swam at him and tore off the lucky-stone with the bag it was in, and threw them both into the water, saying in verse:—

Long I've lived,
And I've let the gods guide me;
Brown hose I never wore
To bring the luck beside me.
I've never knit
All to keep me thriving
Round my neck a bag of worts,
And lo! I'm living!

Upon that they struck out to land.

But this turn that Steinar played was Thord's trick to make Bersi lose his luck in the fight. And Thord went along the shore at low water and found the luck-stone, and hid it away.

Now Steinar had a sword that was called after Skrymir the giant: it was never fouled, and no mishap followed it. On the day fixed, Thord and Steinar went out of the tent, and Cormac also came to the meeting to hold the shield of Steinar. Olaf Peacock got men to help Bersi at the fight, for Thord had been used to hold his shield, but this time failed him. So Bersi went to the trysting-place with a shield-bearer who is not named in the story, and with the round target that once had belonged to Thorveig.

Each man was allowed three shields. Bersi cut up two, and then Cormac took the third. Bersi hacked away, but Whitting his sword stuck fast in the iron border of Steinar's shield. Cormac whirled it up just when Steinar was striking out. He struck the shield-edge, and the sword glanced off, slit Bersi's buttock, sliced his thigh down to the knee-joint, and stuck in the bone. And so Bersi fell.

"There!" cried Steinar, "Cormac's fine is paid."

But Bersi leapt up, slashed at him, and clove his shield. The sword-point was at Steinar's breast when Thord rushed forth and dragged him away, out of reach.

"There!" cried Thord to Bersi, "I have paid thee for the mauling of my sons."

So Bersi was carried to the tent, and his wound was dressed. After a while, Thord came in; and when Bersi saw him he said:—

When the wolf of the war-god was howling
Erstwhile in the north, thou didst aid me:
When it gaped in my hand, and it girded
At the Valkyries' gate for to enter.
But now wilt thou never, O warrior,
At need in the storm-cloud of Odin
Give me help in the tempest of targes
Untrusty, unfaithful art thou.
For when I was a stripling I showed me

To the stems of the lightning of battle
Right meet for the mist of the war-maid;
Ah me! that was said long ago.
But now, and I may not deny it
My neighbours in earth must entomb me,
At the spot I have sought for grave-mound
Where Saurbae lies level and green.

Said Thord, "I have no wish for thy death; but I own it is no sorrow to see thee down for once."

To which Bersi answered in song:—

The friend that I trusted has failed me
In the fight, and my hope is departed:
I speak what I know of; and note it,
Ye nobles, I tell ye no leasing.
Lo, the raven is ready for carnage,
But rare are the friends who should succour.
Yet still let them scorn me and threaten,
I shrink not, I am not dismayed.

After this, Bersi was taken home to Saurbae, and lay long in his wounds.

But when he was carried into the tent, at that very moment Steinar spoke thus to Cormac:—

Of the reapers in harvest of Hilda
Thou hast heard of it four men and eight men
With the edges of Skrymir to aid me
I have urged to their flight from the battle.
Now the singer, the steward of Odin,
Hath smitten at last even Bersi
With the flame of the weapon that feedeth
The flocks of the carrion crows.

"I would have thee keep Skrymir now for thy own, Cormac," said he, "because I mean this fight to be my last."

After that, they parted in friendly wise: Steinar went home, and Cormac fared to Mel.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN. Steingerd Leaves Bersi.

Next it is told of Bersi. His wound healed but slowly. Once on a time a many folk were met to talk about that meeting and what came of it, and Bersi made this song:—

Thou didst leave me forlorn to the sword-stroke,
Strong lord of the field of the serpent!
And needy and fallen ye find me,
Since my foeman ye shielded from danger.
Thus cunning and counsel are victors,
When the craft of the spear-shaft avails not;
But this, as I think, is the ending,
O Thord, of our friendship for ever!

A while later Thord came to his bedside and brought back the luck-stone; and with it he healed Bersi, and they took to their friendship again and held it unbroken ever after.

Because of these happenings, Steingerd fell into loathing of Bersi and made up her mind to part with him; and when she had got everything ready for going away she went to him and said:—"First ye were called Eygla's-Bersi, and then Holmgang-Bersi, but now your right name will be Breech-Bersi!" and spoke her divorce from him.

She went north to her kinsfolk, and meeting with her brother Thorkel she bade him seek her goods again from Bersi—her pin-money and her dowry, saying that she would not own him now that he was maimed. Thorkel Toothgnasher never blamed her for that, and agreed to undertake her errand; but the winter slipped by and his going was put off.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN. The Bane Of Thorkel Toothgnasher.

Afterwards, in the spring, Thorkel Toothgnasher set out to find Bersi and to seek Steingerd's goods again. Bersi said that his burden was heavy enough to bear, even though both together underweight the weight of it. "And I shall not pay the money!" said he.

Said Thorkel, "I bid thee to the holmgang at Orrestholm beside Tjaldanes (Tentness)."

"That ye will think hardly worth while," said Bersi, "such a champion as you are; and yet I undertake for to come."

So they came to the holme and fell to the holmgang. Thord carried the shield before Bersi, and Vali was Thorkel's shield-bearer. When two shields had been hacked to splinters, Bersi bade Thorkel take the third; but he would not. Bersi still had a shield, and a sword that was long and sharp.

Said Thorkel, "The sword ye have, Bersi, is longer than lawful." "That shall not be," cried Bersi; and took up his other sword, Whitting, two-handed, and smote Thorkel his deathblow. Then sang he:—

I have smitten Toothgnasher and slain him,
And I smile at the pride of his boasting.
One more to my thirty I must,er,
And, men! say ye this of the battle:
In the world not a lustier liveth
Among lords of the steed of the oar-bench;
Though by eld of my strength am I stinted
To stain the black wound-bird with blood.

After these things Vali bade Bersi to the holmgang, but he answered in this song:—

They that waken the war of the mail-coats,
For warfare and manslaying famous,
To the lists they have bid me to battle,
Nor bitter I think it not woeful.
It is sport for yon swordsmen who goad me
To strive in the Valkyries' tempest
On the holme; but I fear not to fight them,
Unflinching in battle am I!

The were even about to begin fighting, when Thord came and spoke to them saying:—"Woeful waste of life I call it, if brave men shall be smitten down for the sake of any such matters. I am ready to make it up between ye two."

To this they agreed, and he said:—"Vali, this methinks is the most likely way of bringing you together. Let Bersi take thy sister Thordis to wife. It is a match that may well be to thy worship."

Bersi agreed to this, and it was settled that the land of Brekka should go along with her as a dowry; and so this troth was plighted between them. Bersi afterwards had a strong stone wall built around his homestead, and sat there for many winters in peace.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN. The Rescue Of Steinvor Slim-ankles.

There was a man named Thorarin Alfsson, who lived in the north at Thambardal; that is a dale which goes up from the fiord called Bitra. He was a big man and mighty, and he was by-named Thorarin the Strong. He had spent much of his time in seafaring (as a chapman) and so lucky was he that he always made the harbour he aimed at.

He had three sons; one was named Alf, the next Loft, and the third Skofti. Thorarin was a most overbearing man, and his sons took after him. They were rough, noisy fellows.

Not far away, at Tunga (Tongue) in Bitra, lived a man called Odd. His daughter was named Steinvor, a pretty girl and well set up; her by-name was Slim-ankles. Living with Odd were many fisherman; among them, staying there for the fishing-season, was one Glum, an ill-tempered carle and bad to deal with.

Now once upon a time these two, Odd and Glum, were in talk together which were the greatest men in the countryside. Glum reckoned Thorarin to be foremost, but Odd said Holmgang Bersi was better than he in every way.

"How can ye make that out?" asked Glum.

"Is there any likeness whatever," said Odd, "between the bravery of Bersi and the knavery of Thorarin?"

So they talked about this until they fell out, and laid a wager upon it.

Then Glum wend and told Thorarin. He grew very angry and made many a threat against Odd. And in a while he went and carried off Steinvor from Tunga, all to spite her father; and he gave out that if Odd said anything against it, the worse for him: and so took her home to Thambardal.

Things went on so for a while, and then Odd went to see Holmgang Bersi, and told him what had happened. He asked him for help to get Steinvor back and to wreak vengeance for that shame. Bersi answered that such words had been better unsaid, and bade

him go home and take no share in the business. "But yet," added he, "I promise that I will see to it."

No sooner was Odd gone than Bersi made ready to go from home. He rode fully armed, with Whitting at his belt, and three spears; he came to Thambardal when the day was far spent and the women were coming out of the bower. Steinvor saw him and turning to meet him told of her unhappiness.

"Make ready to go with me," said he; and that she did.

He would not go to Thambardal for nothing, he said; and so he turned to the door where men were sitting by long fires. He knocked at the door, and out there came a man—his name was Thorleif. But Thorarin knew Bersi's voice, and rushed forth with a great carving-knife and laid on to him. Bersi was aware of it, and drew Whitting, and struck him his death-blow.

Then he leapt on horseback and set Steinvor on his knee and took his spears which she had kept for him. He rode some way into the wood, where in a hidden spot he left his horse and Steinvor, bidding her await him. Then he went to a narrow gap through which the high-road ran, and there made ready to stand against his foes.

In Thambardal there was anything but peace. Thorleif ran to tell the sons of Thorarin that he lay dead in the doorway. They asked who had done the deed. He told them. Then they went after Bersi and steered the shortest way to the gap, meaning to get there first; but by that time he was already first at the gap.

When they came near him, Bersi hurled a spear at Alf, and it went right through him. Then Loft cast at Bersi, but he caught the spear on his target and it dropped off. Then Bersi threw at Loft and killed him, and so he did by Skofti.

When all was over, the house-carles of the brothers came up. Thorleif turned back to meet them, and they all went home together.

After that Bersi went to find Steinvor, and mounted his horse. He came home before men were out of bed. They asked him about his journey and he told them. When Odd met him he asked about the fight and how it had passed, and Bersi answered in this verse:—

There was one fed the wolves has encountered
His weird in the dale of the Bowstring,
Thorarin the Strong, 'neath the slayer
Lay slain by the might of my weapon.
And loss of their lives men abided
When Loft fell, and Alf fell, and Skofti.
They were four, yonder kinsmen, and fated,
They were fey, and I met them, alone!

After that Odd went home, but Steinvor was with Bersi, though it disliked Thordis, his wife. By this time his stone wall was somewhat broken down, but he had it built up again; and it is said that no blood-money was ever paid for Thorarin and his sons. So the time went on.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN. How Vali Fell Before An Old Man And A Boy.

Once on a day when Thordis and Bersi were talking together, said he, "I have been thinking I might ask Olaf Peacock for a child of his to foster."

"Nay," said she, "I think little of that. It seems to me a great trouble, and I doubt if folk will reckon more of us for it"

"It means that I should have a sure friend," answered he. "I have many foes, and I am growing heavy with age."

So he went to see Olaf, and asked for a child to foster. Olaf took it with thanks, and Bersi carried Halldor home with him and got Steinvor to be nurse. This too disliked Thordis, and she laid hands on every penny she could get (for fear it should go to Steinvor and the foster-child).

At last Bersi took to ageing much. There was one time when men riding to the Thing stayed at his house. He sat all by himself, and his food was brought him before the rest were served. He had porridge while other folk had cheese and curds. Then he made this verse:—

To batten the black-feathered wound-bird
With the blade of my axe have I stricken
Full thirty and five of my foemen;
I am famed for the slaughter of warriors.
May the fiends have my soul if I stain not

My sharp-edged falchion once over!
And then let the breaker of broadsword
Be borne and with speed to the grave!

"What?" said Halldor; "hast thou a mind to kill another man, then?"

Answered Bersi, "I see the man it would rightly serve!"

Now Thordis let her brother Vali feed his herds on the land of Brekka. Bersi bade his house-carles work at home, and have no dealings with Vali; but still Halldor thought it a hardship that Bersi had not his own will with his own wealth. One day Bersi made this verse:—

Here we lie,
Both on one settle,
Halldor and I,
Men of no mettle.
Youth ails thee,
But thou'lt win through it;
Age ails me,
And I must rue it!

"I do hate Vali," said Halldor; and Bersi answered thus in verse:—

Yon Vali, so wight as he would be,
Well wot I our pasture he grazes;
Right fain yonder fierce helmet-wearer
Under foot my dead body would trample!
But often my wrongs have I wreaked
In wrath on the mail-coated warrior;
On the stems of the sun of the ocean
I have stained the wound-serpent for less!

And again he said:—

With eld I am listless and lamed.
I, the lord of the gold of the armlet:
I sit, and am still under many
A slight from the warders of spear-meads.
Though shield-bearers shape for the singer
To shiver alone in the grave-mound,
Yet once in the war would I redder
The wand that hews helms ere I fail.

"Thy heart is not growing old, foster-father mine!" cried Halldor.

Upon that Bersi fell into talk with Steingor, and said to her "I am laying a plot, and I need thee to help me."

She said she would if she could.

"Pick a quarrel," said he, "with Thordis about the milk-kettle, and do thou hold on to it until you overwhelm it over between you. Then I will come in and take her part and give thee nought but bad words. Then go to Vali and tell him how ill we treat thee."

Everything turned out as he had planned. She went to Vali and told him that things were no way smooth for her; would he take her over the gap (to Bitra to her father's:) and so he did.

But when he was on the way back again, out came Bersi and Halldor to meet him. Bersi had a halberd in one hand and a staff in the other, and Halldor had Whitting. As soon as Vali saw them he turned and hewed at Bersi. Halldor came at his back and fleshed Whitting in his hough-sinews. Thereupon he turned sharply and fell upon Halldor. Then Bersi set the halberd-point betwixt his shoulders. That was his death-wound.

Then they set his shield at his feet and his sword at his head, and spread his cloak over him; and after that got on horseback and rode to five homesteads to make known the deed they had done and then rode home. Men went and buried Vali, and the place where he fell has ever since been called Vali's fall.

Halldor was twelve winters old when these doings came to pass.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN. How Steingor Was Married Again.

Now there was a man named Thorvald, the son of Eystein, by-named the Tinker: he was a wealthy man, a smith, and a skald; but he was mean-spirited for all that. His brother Thorvard lived in the north country at Flíot (Fleet); and they had many kinsmen,—the Skidings they were called,—but little luck or liking.

Now Thorvald the Tinker asked Steingor to wife. Her folk were for it, and she said nothing against it; and so she was wed to him in the very same summer in which she left Bersi.

When Cormac heard the news he made as though he knew nothing whatever about the matter; for a little earlier he had taken his goods aboard ship, meaning to go away with his brother. But one morning early he rode from the ship and went to see Steingor; and when he got talk with her, he asked would she make him a shirt. To which she answered that he had no business to pay her visits; neither Thorvald nor his kinsmen would abide it, she said, but have their revenge.

Thereupon he made his voice:—

Nay, think it or thole it I cannot,
That thou, a young fir of the forest
Enwreathed in the gold that thou guardest,
Shouldst be given to a tinkering tinsmith.
Nay, scarce can I smile, O thou glittering
In silk like the goddess of Baldur,
Since thy father handfasted and pledged thee,
So famed as thou art, to a coward.

"In such words," answered Steingor, "an ill will is plain to hear. I shall tell Thorvald of this ribaldry: no man would sit still under such insults."

Then sang Cormac:—

What gain is to get if he threatens,
White goddess in raiment of beauty,
The scorn that the Skidings may bear me?
I'll set them a weft for their weaving!
I'll rhyme you the roystering catiffs
Till rocks go afloat on the water;
And lucky for them if they loosen
The line of their fate that I ravel!

Thereupon they parted with no blitheness, and Cormac went to his ship.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN. Cormac's Voyage To Norway.

The two brothers had but left the roadstead, when close beside their ship, uprose a walrus. Cormac hurled at it a pole-staff, which struck the beast, so that it sank again: but the men aboard thought that they knew its eyes for the eyes of Thorveig the witch. That walrus came up no more, but of Thorveig it was heard that she lay sick to death; and indeed folk say that this was the end of her.

Then they sailed out to sea, and at last came to Norway, where at that time Hakon, the foster-son of Athelstan, was king. He made them welcome, and so they stayed there the winter long with all honour.

Next summer they set out to the wars, and did many great deeds. Along with them went a man called Siegfried, a German of good birth; and they made raids both far and wide. One day as they were gone up the country eleven men together came against the two brothers, and set upon them; but this business ended in their overcoming the whole eleven, and so after a while back to their ship. The vikings had given them up for lost, and fain were their folk when they came back with victory and wealth.

In this voyage the brothers got great renown: and late in the summer, when winter was coming on, they made up their minds to steer for Norway. They met with cold winds; the sail was behung with icicles, but the brothers were always to the fore. It was on his voyage that Cormac made the song:—

O shake me yon rime from the awning;
Your singer's a-cold in his berth;
For the hills are all hooded, dear Skardi,
In the hoary white veil of the Skirdi.
There's one they call Wielder of Thunder
I would were as chill and as cold;
But he leaves not the side of his lady
As the lindworm forsakes not its gold.

"Always talking of her now!" said Thorgils; "and yet thou wouldst not have her when thou couldst."

"That was more the fault of witchcraft," answered Cormac, "that any want of faith in me."

Not long after they were sailing hard among crags, and shortened sail in great danger.

"It is a pity Thorvald Tinker is not with us here!" said Cormac. Said Thorgils with a smile, "Most likely he is better off than we, to-day!"

But before long they came to land in Norway.

CHAPTER NINETEEN. How Cormac Fought In Ireland, And Went Home To Iceland; And How He Met Steingerd Again.

While they were abroad there had been a change of kings; Hakon was dead, and Harald Greyfell reigned in his stead. They offered friendship to the king, and he took their suit kindly; so they went with him to Ireland, and fought battles there.

Once upon a time when they had gone ashore with the king, a great host came against him, and as the armies met, Cormac made this song:—

I dread not a death from the foemen,
Though we dash at them, buckler to buckler,
While our prince in the power of his warriors
Is proud of me foremost in battle.
But the glimpse of a glory comes o'er me
Like the gleam of the moon on the skerry,
And I faint and I fail for my longing,
For the fair one at home in the North.

"Ye never get into danger," said Thorgils, "but ye think of Steingerd!"

"Nay," answered Cormac, "but it's not often I forget her."

Well: this was a great battle, and king Harald won a glorious victory. While his men drove the rout before him, the brothers were shoulder to shoulder; and they fell upon nine men at once and fought them. And while they were at it, Cormac sang:—

Fight on, arrow-driver, undaunted,
And down with the foemen of Harald!
What are nine? they are nought! Thou and I, lad,
Are enough; they are ours! We have won them!
But, at home, in the arms of an outlaw
That all the gods loathe for a monster,
So white and so winsome she nestles
Yet once she was loving to me!

"It always comes down to that!" said Thorgils. When the fight was over, the brothers had got the victory, and the nine men had fallen before them; for which they won great praise from the king, and many honours beside.

But while they were ever with the king in his warfarings, Thorgils was aware that Cormac was used to sleep but little; and he asked why this might be. This was the song Cormac made in answer:—

Surf on a rock-bound shore of the sea-king's blue domain,
Look how it lashes the crags, hark how it thunders again!
But all the din of the isles that the Delver heaves in foam
In the draught of the undertow glides out to the sea-gods home.
Which of us two should test? Is it thou, with thy heart at ease,
Or that am surf on the shore in the tumult of angry seas,
Drawn, if I sleep, to her that shines with the ocean-gleam,
Dashed, when I wake, to woe, for the want of my glittering dream.

"And now let me tell you this, brother," he went on. "Hereby I give out that I am going back to Iceland."

Said Thorgils, "There is many a snare set for thy feet, brother, to drag thee down, I know not whither."

But when the king heard of his longing to begone, he sent for Cormac, and said that he did unwisely, and would hinder him from his journey. But all this availed nothing, and aboard ship he went.

At the outset they met with foul winds, so that they shipped great seas, and the yard broke. Then Cormac sang:—

I take it not ill, like the Tinker
If a trickster had fendered his muck-sled;
For he loves not rough travelling, the losel,
And loath would he be of this uproar.
I flinch not, nay, hear it, ye fearless
Who flee not when arrows are raining,
Though the steeds of the ocean be storm-bound
And stayed in the harbour of Solund.

So they pushed out to sea, and hard weather they tholed. Once on a time when the waves broke over the deck and drenched them all, Cormac made this song:—

O the Tinker's a lout and a lubber,
And the life of a sailor he dares not,
When the snow-crested surges caress us
And sweep us away with their kisses,
He bides in a berth that is warmer,
Embraced in the arms of his lady;
And lightly she lulls him to slumber,
But long she has reft me of rest!

They had a very rough voyage, but landed at last in Midfiord, and anchored off shore. Looking landward they beheld where a lady was riding by; and Cormac knew at once that it was Steingerd. He bade his men launch a boat, and rowed ashore. He went quickly from the boat, and got a horse, and rode to meet her. When they met, he leapt from horseback and helped her to alight, making a seat for her beside him on the ground.

Their horses wandered away: the day passed on, and it began to grow dark. At last Steingerd said, "It is time to look for our horses."

Little search would be needed, said Cormac; but when he looked about, they were nowhere in sight. As it happened, they were hidden in a gill not far from where the two were sitting.

So, as night was hard at hand, they set out to walk, and came to a little farm, where they were taken in and treated well, even as they needed. That night they slept each on either side of the carved wainscot that parted bed from bed: and Cormac made this song:—

We rest, O my beauty, my brightest,
But a barrier lies ever between us.
So fierce are the fates and so mighty
I feel it that rule to their rede.
Ah, nearer I would be, and nigher,
Till nought should be left to dispart us,
The wielder of Skofnung the wonder,
And the wearer of sheen from the deep.

"It was better thus," said Steingerd; but he sang:—

We have slept 'neath one roof-tree, slept softly,
O sweet one, O queen of the mead-horn,
O glory of sea-dazzle gleaming,
These grim hours, these five nights, I count them.
And here in the kettle-prow cabined
While the crow's day drags on in the darkness,
How loathly me seems to be lying,
How lonely, so near and so far!

"That," said she, "is all over and done with; name it no more." But he sang:—

The hot stone shall float, ay, the hearth-stone,
Like a husk of the corn on the water,
Ah, woe for the wight that she loves not!
And the world, ah, she loathes me! shall perish,
And the fells that are famed for their hugeness
Shall fail and be drowned in the ocean,
Or ever so gracious a goddess
Shall grow into beauty like Steingerd.

Then Steingerd cried out that she would not have him make songs upon her: but he went on:—

I have known it and noted it clearly,
O neckleted fair one, in visions,
Is it doom for my hopes, is it daring
To dream? O so oft have I seen it!
Even this, that the boughs of thy beauty,
O braceleted fair one, shall twine them
Round the hill where the hawk loves to settle,
The hand of thy lover, at last.

"That," said she, "never shall be, if I can help it. Thou didst let me go, once for all; and there is no more hope for thee."

So then they slept the night long; and in the morning, when Cormac was making ready to be gone, he found Steingerd, and took the ring off his finger to give her.

"Fiend take thee and thy gold together!" she cried. And this is what he answered:—

To a dame in her broideries dainty
This drift of the furnace I tendered;
O day of ill luck, for a lover
So lured, and so heartlessly cheated!
Too blithe in the pride of her beauty,
The bliss that I crave she denies me;
So rich that no boon can I render,
And my ring she would hurl to the fiends!

So Cormac rode forth, being somewhat angry with Steingerd, but still more so with the Tinker. He rode home to Mel, and stayed there all the winter, taking lodgings for his chapmen near the ship.

CHAPTER TWENTY. Of A Spiteful Song That Cormac Never Made; And How Angry Steingerd Was.

Now Thorvald the Tinker lived in the north-country at Svinadal (Swindale), but his brother Thorvard at Fliot. In the winter Cormac took his way northward to see Steingerd; and coming to Svinadal he dismounted and went into the chamber. She was sitting on the dais, and he took his seat beside her; Thorvald sat on the bench, and Narfi by him.

Then said Narfi to Thorvald, "How canst thou sit down, with Cormac here? It is no time, this, for sitting still!"

But Thorvald answered, "I am content; there is no harm done it seems to me, though they do talk together."

"That is ill," said Narfi.

Not long afterwards Thorvald met his brother Thorvard and told him about Cormac's coming to his house.

"Is it right, think you," said Thorvard, "to sit still while such things happen?"

He answered that there was no harm done as yet, but that Cormac's coming pleased him not.

"I'll mend that," cried Thorvard, "if you dare not. The shame of it touches us all."

So this was the next thing,—that Thorvard came to Svinadal, and the Skiding brothers and Narfi paid a gangrel beggar-man to sing a song in the hearing of Steingerd, and to say that Cormac had made it,—which was a lie. They said that Cormac had taught this song to one called Eylaug, a kinswoman of his; and these were the words:—

I wish an old witch that I know of,
So wealthy and proud of her havings,
Were turned to a steed in the stable
Called Steingerd and I were the rider!
I'd bit her, and bridle, and saddle,
I'd back her and drive her and tame her;
So many she owns for her masters,
But mine she will never become!

Then Steingerd grew exceedingly angry, so that she would not so much as hear Cormac named. When he heard that, he went to see her. Long time he tried in vain to get speech with her; but at last she gave this answer,—that she disliked his holding her up to shame,—“And now it is all over the country-side!”

Cormac said it was not true; but she answered, “Thou mightest flatly deny it, if I had not heard it.”

“Who sang it in thy hearing?” asked he.

She told him who sang it,—“And thou needest not hope for speech with me if this prove true.”

He rode away to look for the rascal, and when he found him the truth was forced out at last. Cormac was very angry, and set on Narfi and slew him. That same onset was meant for Thorvald, but he hid himself in the shadow and skulked, until men came between then and parted them. Said Cormac:—

There, hide in the house like a coward,
And hope not hereafter to scare me
With the scorn of thy brethren the Skidings,
I'll set them a weft for their weaving!
I'll rhyme on the swaggering rascals
Till rocks go afloat on the water;
And lucky for you if ye loosen
The line of your fate that I ravel!

This went all over the country-side and the feud grew fiercer between them. The brothers Thorvald and Thorvard used big words, and Cormac was wroth when he heard them.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE. How Thorvard Would Not Fight, But Tried To Get The Law Of Cormac.

After this Thorvard sent word from Fliot that he was fain to fight Cormac, and he fixed time and place, saying that he would now take revenge for that song of shame and all other slights.

To this Cormac agreed; and when the day came he went to the spot that was named, but Thorvard was not there, nor any of his men. Cormac met a woman from the farm hard by, who greeted him, and they asked each other for news.

“What is your errand?” said she; “and why are you waiting here?”

Then he answered with this song:—

Too slow for the struggle I find him,
That spender of fire from the ocean,
Who flung me a challenge to fight him
From Fleet in the land of the North.
That half-witted hero should get him
A heart made of clay for his carcase,
Though the mate of the may with the necklace
Is more of a fool than his fere!

“Now,” said Cormac, “I bid Thorvard anew to the holmgang, if he can be called in his right mind. Let him be every man's nothing if he come not!” and then he made this song:—

The nothing shall silence me never,
Though now for their shame they attack me,
But the wit of the Skald is my weapon,
And the wine of the gods will uphold me.
And this they shall feel in its fulness;
Here my fame has its birth and beginning;
And the stout spears of battle shall see it,
If I 'scape from their hands with my life.

Then the brothers set on foot a law-suit against him for libel. Cormac's kinsmen backed him up to answer it, and he would let no terms be made, saying that they deserved the shame put upon them, and no honour; he was not unready to meet them, unless they played him false. Thorvard had not come to the holmgang when he had been challenged, and therefore the shame had fallen of itself upon him and his, and they must put up with it.

So time passed until the Huna-water Thing. Thorvard and Cormac both went to the meeting, and once they came together.

“Much enmity we owe thee,” said Thorvard, “and in many ways. Now therefore I challenge thee to the holmgang, here at the Thing.”

Said Cormac, “Wilt thou be fitter than before? Thou hast drawn back time after time.”

“Nevertheless,” said Thorvard, “I will risk it. We can abide thy spite no longer.”

“Well,” said Cormac, “I'll not stand in the way;” and went home to Mel.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO. What The Witch Did For Them In Their Fights.

At Spakonufell (Spae-wife's-fell) lived Thordis the spae-wife, of whom we have told before, with her husband Thorolf. They were both at the Thing, and many a man thought her good-will was of much avail. So Thorvard sought her out, to ask her help against Cormac, and gave her a fee; and she made him ready for the holmgang according to her craft.

Now Cormac told his mother what was forward, and she asked if he thought good would come of it.

“Why not?” said he.

“That will not be enough for thee,” said Dalla. “Thorvard will never make bold to fight without witchcraft to help him. I think it wise for thee to see Thordis the spae-wife, for there is going to be foul play in this affair.”

“It is little to my mind,” said he; and yet went to see Thordis, and asked her help.

“Too late ye have come,” said she. “No weapon will bite on him now. And yet I would not refuse thee. Bide here to-night, and seek thy good luck. Anyway, I can manage so that iron bite thee no more than him.”

So Cormac stayed there for the night; and, awaking, found that some one was groping round the coverlet at his head. “Who is there?” he asked, but whoever it was made off, and out at the house-door, and Cormac after. And then he saw it was Thordis, and she was going to the place where the fight was to be, carrying a goose under her arm.

He asked what it all meant, and she set down the goose, saying, “Why couldn't ye keep quiet?”

So he lay down again, but held himself awake, for he wanted to know what she would be doing. Three times she came, and every time he tried to find out what she was after. The third time, just as

he came out, she had killed two geese and let the blood run into a bowl, and she had taken up the third goose to kill it.

“What means this business, foster-mother?” said he.

“True it will prove, Cormac, that you are a hard one to help,” said she. “I was going to break the spell Thorveig laid on thee and Steingerd. Ye could have loved one another been happy if I had killed the third goose and no one seen it.”

“I believe nought of such things,” cried he; and this song he made about it:—

I gave her an ore at the ayre,
That the arts of my foe should not prosper;
And twice she has taken the knife,
And twice she has offered the offering;
But the blood is the blood of a goose,
What boots it if two should be slaughtered?
Never sacrifice geese for a Skald
Who sings for the glory of Odin!

So they went to the holmgang; but Thorvald gave the spae-wife a still greater fee, and offered the sacrifice of geese; and Cormac said:—

Trust never another man’s mistress!
For I know, on this woman who weareth
The fire of the field of the sea-king
The fiends have been riding to revel.
The witch with her hoarse cry is working
For woe when we go to the holmgang,
And if bale be the end of the battle
The blame, be assured, will be hers.

“Well,” she said, “I can manage so that none shall know thee.” Then Cormac began to upbraid her, saying she did nought but ill, and wanting to drag her out to the door to look at her eyes in the sunshine. His brother Thorgils made him leave that:—“What good will it do thee?” said he.

Now Steingerd gave out that she had a mind to see the fight; and so she did. When Cormac saw her he made this song:—

I have fared to the field of the battle,
O fair one that wearest the wimple!
And twice for thy sake have I striven;
What stays me as now from thy favour?
This twice have I gotten thee glory,
O goddess of ocean! and surely
To my dainty delight, to my darling
I am dearer by far than her mate.

So then they set to. Cormac’s sword bit not at all, and for a long while they smote strokes one upon the other, but neither sword bit. At last Cormac smote upon Thorvard’s side so great a blow that his ribs gave way and were broken; he could fight no more, and thereupon they parted. Cormac looked and saw where a bull was standing, which he slew for a sacrifice; and being heated, he doffed his helmet from his head, saying this song:—

I have fared to the field of the battle,
O fair one that wearest the bracelet!
Even three times for thee have I striven,
And this thou canst never deny me.
But the reed of the fight would not redden,
Though it rang on the shield-bearer’s harness;
For the spells of a spae-wife had blunted
My sword that was eager for blood.

He wiped the sweat from him on the corner of Steingerd’s mantle; and said:—

So oft, being wounded and weary,
I must wipe my sad brow on thy mantle.
What pangs for thy sake are my portion,
O pine-tree with red gold enwreathed!
Yet beside thee he snugs on the settle
As thou seamest thy broiery, that rhymester!
And the shame of it welms me in sorrow,
O Steingerd! that rascal unslain!

And then Cormac prayed Steingerd that she would go with him: but Nay, she said; she would have her own way about men. So they parted, and both were ill pleased.

Thorvard was taken home, and she bound his wounds. Cormac was now always meeting with Steingerd. Thorvard healed but slowly; and when he could get on his feet he went to see Thordis, and asked her what was best to help his healing.

“A hill there is,” answered she, “not far away from here, where elves have their haunt. Now get you the bull that Cormac killed,

and redden the outer side of the hill with its blood, and make a feast for the elves with its flesh. Then thou wilt be healed.”

So they sent word to Cormac that they would buy the bull. He answered that he would sell it, but then he must have the ring that was Steingerd’s. So they brought the ring, took the bull, and did with it as Thordis bade them do. On which Cormac made a song:—

When the workers of wounds are returning,
And with them the sacrifice reddened,
Then a lady in raiment of linen,
Who loved me, time was, she will ask:
My ring, have ye robbed me? where is it?
I have wrought them no little displeasure:
For the swain that is swarthy has won it,
The son of old Ogmund, the skald.

It fell out as he guessed. Steingerd was very angry because they had sold her ring.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE. How Cormac Beat Thorvard Again.

After that, Thorvard was soon healed, and when he thought he was strong again, he rode to Mel and challenged Cormac to the holmgang.

“It takes thee long to tire of it,” said Cormac: “but I’ll not say thee nay.”

So they went to the fight, and Thordis met Thorvard now as before, but Cormac sought no help from her. She blunted Cormac’s sword, so that it would not bite, but yet he struck so great a stroke on Thorvard’s shoulder that the collarbone was broken and his hand was good for nothing. Being so maimed he could fight no longer, and had to pay another ring for his ransom.

Then Thorolf of Spakonufell set upon Cormac and struck at him. He ward off the blow and sang this song:—

This reddener of shields, feebly wrathful,
His rusty old sword waved against me,
Who am singer and sacred to Odin!
Go, snuffle, most wretched of men, thou!
A thrust of thy sword is as thewless
As thou, silly stirrer of battle.
What danger to me from thy daring,
Thou doited old witch-woman’s carle?

Then he killed a bull in sacrifice according to use and wont, saying, “Ill we brook your overbearing and the witchcraft of Thordis:” and he made this song:—

The witch in the wave of the offering
Has wasted the flame of the buckler,
Lest its bite on his back should be deadly
At the bringing together of weapons.
My sword was not sharp for the onset
When I sought the helm-wearer in battle;
But the cur got enough to cry craven,
With a clout that will mind him of me!

After that each party went home, and neither was well pleased with these doings.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR. How They All Went Out To Norway.

Now all the winter long Cormac and Thorgils laid up their ship in Hrutford; but in spring the chapmen were off to sea, and so the brothers made up their minds for the voyage. When they were ready to start, Cormac went to see Steingerd: and before they two parted he kissed her twice, and his kisses were not at all hasty. The Tinker would not have it; and so friends on both sides came in, and it was settled that Cormac should pay for this that he had done.

“How much?” asked he.

“The two rings that I parted with,” said Thorvard. Then Cormac made a song:—

Here is gold of the other’s well gleaming
In guerdon for this one and that one,
Here is treasure of Fafnir the fire-drake
In fee for the kiss of my lady.
Never wearer of ring, never wielder
Of weapon has made such atonement;
Never dearer were deeply-drawn kisses,
For the dream of my bliss is betrayed.

And then, when he started to go aboard his ship he made another song:—

One song from my heart would I send her
Ere we shall, ere I leave her and lose her,
That dainty one, decked in her jewels
Who dwells in the valley of Swindale.
And each word that I utter shall enter
The ears of that lady of bounty,
Saying: Bright one, my beauty, I love thee,
Ah, better by far than my life!

So Cormac went abroad and his brother Thorgils went with him; and when they came to the king's court they were made welcome.

Now it is told that Steingerd spoke to Thorvald the Tinker that they also should abroad together. He answered that it was mere folly, but nevertheless he could not deny her. So they set off on their voyage: and as they made their way across the sea, they were attacked by vikings who fell on them to rob them and to carry away Steingerd. But it so happened that Cormac heard of it; and he made after them and gave good help, so that they saved everything that belonged to them, and came safely at last to the court of the king of Norway.

One day Cormac was walking in the street, and spied Steingerd sitting within doors. So he went into the house and sat down beside her, and they had a talk together which ended in his kissing her four kisses. But Thorvald was on the watch. He drew his sword, but the women-folk rushed in to part them, and word was sent to King Harald. He said they were very troublesome people to keep in order.—“But let me settle this matter between you,” said he; and they agreed.

Then spake the king:—“One kiss shall be atoned for by this, that Cormac helped you to get safely to land. The next kiss is Cormac's, because he saved Steingerd. For the other two he shall pay two ounces of gold.”

Upon which Cormac sang the same song that he had made before:—

Here is gold of the otter's well gleaming
In guerdon for this one and that one,
Here is treasure of Fafnir the fire-drake
In fee for the kiss of my lady.
Never wearer of ring, never wielder
Of weapon has made such atonement;
Never dearer were deeply-drawn kisses,
And the dream of my bliss is betrayed.

Another day he was walking in the street and met Steingerd again. He turned to her and prayed her to walk with him. She would not; whereupon he laid hand on her, to lead her along. She cried out for help; and as it happened, the king was standing not far off, and went up to them. He thought this behaviour most unseemly, and took her away, speaking sharply to Cormac. King Harald made himself very angry over this affair; but Cormac was one of his courtiers, and it was not long before he got into favour again, and then things went fair and softly for the rest of the winter.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE. How They Cruised With The King's Fleet, And Quarrelled, And Made It Up.

In the following spring King Harald set forth to the land of Permia with a great host. Cormac was one of the captains in that warfaring, and in another ship was Thorvald: the other captains of ships are not named in our story.

Now as they were all sailing in close order through a narrow sound, Cormac swung his steering-oar and hit Thorvald a clout on the ear, so that he fell from his place at the helm in a swoon; and Cormac's ship hove to, when she lost her rudder. Steingerd had been sitting beside Thorvald; she laid hold of the tiller, and ran Cormac down. When he saw what she was doing, he sang:—

There is one that is nearer and nigher
To the noblest of dames than her lover:
With the haft of the helm is he smitten
On the hat-block and fairly amidsthips!
The false heir of Eysteine, he falters;
He falls in the poop of his galley!

Nay! steer not upon me, O Steingerd,
Though stoutly ye carry the day!

So Cormac's ship capsized under him; but his crew were saved without loss of time, for there were plenty of people round about. Thorvald soon came round again, and they all went on their way. The king offered to settle the matter between them; and when they both agreed, he gave judgment that Thorvald's hurt was atoned for by Cormac's upset.

In the evening they went ashore; and the king and his men sat down to supper. Cormac was sitting outside the door of a tent, drinking out of the same cup with Steingerd. While they were busy at it, a young fellow for mere sport and mockery stole the brooch out of Cormac's fur cloak, which he had doffed and laid aside; and when he came to take his cloak again, the brooch was gone. He sprang up and rushed after the young fellow, with the spear that he called Vigr (the spear) and shot at him, but missed. This was the song he made about it:—

The youngster has pilfered my pin,
As I pledged the gay dame in the beaker;
And now must we brawl for a brooch
Like boys when they wrangle and tussle.
Right well have I shafted my spear,
Though I shot nothing more than the gravel:
But sure, if I missed at my man,
The moss has been prettily slaughtered!

After this they went on their way to the land of Permia, and after that they went home again to Norway.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX. How Cormac Saved Steingerd Once More From Pirates; And How They Parted For Good And All.

Thorvald the Tinker fitted out his ship for a cruise to Denmark, and Steingerd sailed with him. A little afterwards the brothers set out on the same voyage, and late one evening they made the Brenneyjar.

There they saw Thorvald's ship riding, and found him aboard with part of his crew; but they had been robbed of all their goods, and Steingerd had been carried off by Vikings. Now the leader of those Vikings was Thorstein, the son of that Asmund Ashenside, the old enemy of Ogmund, the father of Cormac and Thorgils.

So Thorvald and Cormac met, and Cormac asked how came it that his voyage had been so unlucky.

“Things have not turned out for the best, indeed,” said he.

“What is the matter?” asked Cormac. “Is Steingerd missing?”

“She is gone,” said Thorvald, “and all our goods.”

“Why don't you go after her?” asked Cormac.

“We are not strong enough,” said Thorvald.

“Do you mean to say you can't?” said Cormac.

“We have not the means to fight Thorstein,” said Thorvald. “But if thou hast, go in and fight for thy own hand.”

“I will,” said Cormac.

So at nightfall the brothers went in a boat and rowed to the Viking fleet, and boarded Thorstein's ship. Steingerd was in the cabin on the poop; she had been allotted to one of the Vikings; but most of the crew were ashore round the cooking-fires. Cormac got the story out of the men who were cooking, and they told all the brothers wanted to know. They clambered on board by the ladder; Thorgils dragged the bridegroom out to the gunwale, and Cormac cut him down then and there. Then he dived into the sea with Steingerd and swam ashore; but when he was nearing the land a swarm of eels twisted round his hands and feet, so that he was dragged under. On which he made this song:—

They came at me yonder in crowds,
O kemp of the shield-serpents, wrangle!
When I fared on my way through the flood,
That flock of the wights of the water.
And ne'er to the gate of the gods
Had I got me, if there had I perished;
Yet once and again have I won,
Little woman, thy safety in peril!

So he swam ashore and brought Steingerd back to her husband.

Thorvald bade Steingerd to go, at last, along with Cormac, for he had fairly won her, and manfully. That was what he, too,

desired, said Cormac; but “Nay,” said Steingerd, “she would not change knives.”

“Well,” said Cormac, “it was plain that this was not to be. Evil beings,” he said, “ill luck, had parted them long ago.” And he made this song:—

Nay, count not the comfort had brought me,
Fair queen of the ring, thy embrace!
Go, mate with the man of thy choosing,
Scant mirth will he get of thy grace!
Be dearer henceforth to thy dastard,
False dame of the coif, than to me;
I have spoken the word; I have sung it;
I have said my last farewell to thee.

And so he bade her begone with her husband.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN. The Swan-Songs of Cormac.

After these things the brothers turned back to Norway, and Thorvald the Tinker made his way to Iceland. But the brothers went warfaring round about Ireland, Wales, England and Scotland, and they were reckoned to be the most famous of men. It was they who first built the castle of Scarborough; they made raids into Scotland, and achieved many great feats, and led a mighty host; and in all that host none was like Cormac in strength and courage.

Once upon a time, after a battle, Cormac was driving the flying foe before him while the rest of his host had gone back aboard ship. Out of the woods there rushed against him one as monstrous big as an idol—a Scot; and a fierce struggle began. Cormac felt for his sword, but it had slipped out of the sheath; he was over-matched, for the giant was possessed; but yet he reached out, caught his sword, and struck the giant his death-blow. Then the giant cast his hands about Cormac, and gripped his sides so hard that the ribs cracked, and he fell over, and the dead giant on top of him, so that he could not stir. Far and wide his folk were looking for him, but at last they found him and carried him aboard ship. Then he made this song:—

When my manhood was matched in embraces
With the might of yon horror, the strangler,
Far other I found it than folding
That fair one ye know in my arms!
On the high-seat of heroes with Odin
From the horn of the gods I were drinking
O'er soon, let me speak it to warriors,
If Skrymir had failed of his aid.

Then his wounds were looked to; they found that his ribs were broken on both sides. He said it was no use trying to heal him, and lay there in his wounds for a time, while his men grieved that he should have been so unwary of his life.

He answered them in song:—

Of yore never once did I ween it,
When I wielded the cleaver of targets,
That sickness was fated to foil me,
A fighter so hardy as I.
But I shrink not, for others must share it,
Stout shafts of the spear though they deem them,
O hard at my heart is the death-pang,
Thus hopeless the bravest may die.

And this song also:—

He came not with me in the morning,
Thy mate, O thou fairest of women,
When we reddened for booty the broadsword,
So brave to the hand-grip, in Ireland:
When the sword from its scabbard was loosened
And sang round my cheeks in the battle
For the feast of the Fury, and blood-drops
Fell hot on the neb of the raven.

And then he began to fail.

This was his last song:—

There was dew from the wound smitten deeply
That drained from the stroke of the sword-edge;
There was red on the weapon I wielded
In the war with the glorious and gallant:
Yet not where the broadsword, the blood wand,
Was borne by the lords of the falchion,
But low in the straw like a laggard,
O my lady, dishonoured I die!

He said that his will was to give Thorgils his brother all he had,—the goods he owned and the host he led; for he would like best, he said, that his brother should have the use of them.

So then Cormac died. Thorgils became captain over the host, and was long time in viking.

And so ends the story.

Grettir's Saga

CHAPTER I.

There was a man named Onund, who was the son of Ufeigh Club-foot, the son of Ivar the Smiter; Onund was brother of Gudbiorg, the mother of Gudbrand Ball, the father of Asta, the mother of King Olaf the Saint. Onund was an Uplander by the kin of his mother; but the kin of his father dwelt chiefly about Rogaland and Hordaland. He was a great viking, and went harrying west over the Sea. Balk of Sotanes, the son of Blaeng, was with him herein, and Orm the Wealthy withal, and Hallvard was the name of the third of them. They had five ships, all well manned, and therewith they harried in the South-isles; and when they came to Barra, they found there a king, called Kiarval, and he, too, had five ships. They gave him battle, and a hard fray there was. The men of Onund were of the eagerest, and on either side many fell; but the end of it was that the king fled with only one ship. So there the men of Onund took both ships and much wealth, and abode there through the winter. For three summers they harried throughout Ireland and Scotland, and thereafter went to Norway.

CHAPTER II.

In those days were there great troubles in Norway. Harald the Unshorn, son of Halfdan the Black, was pushing forth for the kingdom. Before that he was King of the Uplands; then he went north through the land, and had many battles there, and ever won the day. Thereafter he harried south in the land, and wheresoever he came, laid all under him; but when he came to Hordaland, swarms of folk came thronging against him; and their captains were Kiotvi the Wealthy, and Thorir Longchin, and those of South Rogaland, and King Sulki. Geirmund Helskin was then in the west over the Sea; nor was he in that battle, though he had a kingdom in Hordaland.

Now that autumn Onund and his fellows came from the west over the Sea; and when Thorir Longchin and King Kiotvi heard thereof, they sent men to meet them, and prayed them for help, and promised them honours. Then they entered into fellowship with Thorir and his men; for they were exceeding fain to try their strength, and said that there would they be whereas the fight was hottest.

Now was the meeting with Harald the King in Rogaland, in that firth which is called Hafrsfirth; and both sides had many men. This was the greatest battle that has ever been fought in Norway, and hereof most Sagas tell; for of those is ever most told, of whom the Sagas are made; and thereto came folk from all the land, and many from other lands and swarms of vikings.

Now Onund laid his ship alongside one board of the ship of Thorir Longchin, about the midst of the fleet, but King Harald laid his on the other board, because Thorir was the greatest bearserk, and the stoutest of men; so the fight was of the fiercest on either side. Then the king cried on his bearserks for an onslaught, and they were called the Wolf-coats, for on them would no steel bite, and when they set on nought might withstand them. Thorir defended him very stoutly, and fell in all hardihood on board his ship; then was it cleared from stem to stern, and cut from the grapplings, and let drift astern betwixt the other ships. Thereafter the king's men laid their ship alongside Onund's, and he was in the forepart thereof and fought manly; then the king's folk said, "Lo, a forward man in the forecastle there, let him have somewhat to mind him how that he was in this battle." Now Onund put one foot

out over the bulwark and dealt a blow at a man, and even therewith a spear was aimed at him, and as he put the blow from him he bent backward withal, and one of the king's forecastle men smote at him, and the stroke took his leg below the knee and sheared it off, and forthwith made him unmeet for fight. Then fell the more part of the folk on board his ship; but Onund was brought to the ship of him who is called Thrand; he was the son of Biorn, and brother of Eyvind the Eastman; he was in the fight against King Harald and lay on the other board of Onund's ship.

But now, after these things, the more part of the fleet scattered in flight; Thrand and his men, with the other vikings, got them away each as he might, and sailed west over the Sea; Onund went with him, and Balk and Hallvard Sweeping; Onund was healed, but went with a wooden leg all his life after; therefore as long as he lived was he called Onund Treefoot.

CHAPTER III.

At that time were many great men west over the Sea, such as had fled from their lands in Norway before King Harald, because he had made all those outlaws, who had met him in battle, and taken to him their possessions. So, when Onund was healed of his wounds, he and Thrand went to meet Geirmund Helskin, because he was the most famed of vikings west there over the Sea, and they asked him whether he had any mind to seek after that kingdom which he had in Hordaland, and offered him their fellowship herein; for they deemed they had a sore loss of their lands there, since Onund was both mighty and of great kin.

Geirmund said that so great had grown the strength of King Harald, that he deemed there was little hope that they would win honour in their war with him when men had been worsted, even when all the folk of the land had been drawn together; and yet withal that he was loth to become a king's thrall and pray for that which was his own; that he would find somewhat better to do than that; and now, too, he was no longer young. So Onund and his fellows went back to the South-isles, and there met many of their friends.

There was a man, Ufeigh by name, who was bynamed Grettir; he was the son of Einar, the son of Olvir Bairn-Carle; he was brother to Oleif the Broad, the father of Thormod Shaft; Steinulf was the name of Olvir Bairn-Carle's son, he was the father of Una whom Thorbiorn Salmon-Carle had to wife. Another son of Olvir Bairn-Carle was Steinmod, the father of Konal, who was the father of Aldis of Barra. The son of Konal was Steinmod, the father of Haldora, the wife of Eilif, the son of Ketil the Onehanded. Ufeigh Grettir had to wife Asny, the daughter of Vestar Haengson; and Asmund the Beardless and Asbiorn were the sons of Ufeigh Grettir, but his daughters were these, Aldis, and Asa, and Asvor. Ufeigh had fled away west over the Sea before Harald the king, and so had Thormod Shaft his kinsman, and had with them their kith and kin; and they harried in Scotland, and far and wide west beyond the sea.

Now Thrand and Onund Treefoot made west for Ireland to find Eyvind the Eastman, Thrand's brother, who was Land-ward along the coasts of Ireland; the mother of Eyvind was Hlif, the daughter of Rolf, son of Ingiald, the son of King Frodi; but Thrand's mother was Helga, the daughter of Ondott the Crow; Biorn was the name of the father of Eyvind and Thrand, he was the son of Rolf from Am; he had had to flee from Gothland, for that he had burned in

his house Sigfast, the son-in-law of King Solver; and thereafter had he gone to Norway, and was the next winter with Grim the hersir, the son of Kolbiorn the Abasher. Now Grim had a mind to murder Biorn for his money, so he fled thence to Ondott the Crow, who dwelt in Hvinisfirth in Agdir; he received Biorn well, and Biorn was with him in the winter, but was in warfare in summer-tide, until Hlif his wife died; and after that Ondott gave Biorn Helga his daughter, and then Biorn left off warring.

Now thereon Eyvind took to him the war-ships of his father, and was become a great chief west over the Sea; he wedded Rarfarta, the daughter of Kiarval, King of Ireland; their sons were Helgi the Lean and Snaebiorn.

So when Thrand and Onund came to the South-isles, there they met Ufeigh Grettir and Thormod Shaft, and great friendship grew up betwixt them, for each thought he had gained from hell the last who had been left behind in Norway while the troubles there were at the highest. But Onund was exceeding moody, and when Thrand marked it, he asked what he was brooding over in his mind. Onund answered, and sang this stave—

What joy since that day can I get
When shield-fire's thunder last I met;
Ah, too soon clutch the claws of ill;
For that axe-edge shall grieve me still.
In eyes of fighting man and thane,
My strength and manhood are but vain,
This is the thing that makes me grow
A joyless man; is it enow?

Thrand answered that whereso he was, he would still be deemed a brave man, "And now it is meet for thee to settle down and get married, and I would put forth my word and help, if I but knew whereto thou lookest."

Onund said he did in manly wise, but that his good hope for matches of any gain was gone by now.

Thrand answered, "Ufeigh has a daughter who is called Asa, thitherward will we turn if it seem good to thee." Onund showed that he was willing enough hereto; so afterwards they talked the matter over with Ufeigh; he answered well, and said that he knew how that Onund was a man of great kin and rich of chattels; "but his lands," said he, "I put at low worth, nor do I deem him to be a hale man, and withal my daughter is but a child."

Thrand said, that Onund was a briskeer man yet than many who were hale of both legs, and so by Thrand's help was this bargain struck; Ufeigh was to give his daughter but chattels for dowry, because those lands that were in Norway neither would lay down any money for.

A little after Thrand wooed the daughter of Thormod Shaft, and both were to sit in troth for three winters.

So thereafter they went a harrying in the summer, but were in Barra in the winter-tide.

CHAPTER IV.

There were two vikings called Vigbiod and Vestmar; they were South-islanders, and lay out both winter and summer; they had thirteen ships, and harried mostly in Ireland, and did many an ill deed there till Eyvind the Eastman took the land-wardship; thereafter they got them gone to the South-isles, and harried there and all about the firths of Scotland: against these went Thrand and Onund, and heard that they had sailed to that island, which is called Bute. Now Onund and his folk came there with five ships; and when the vikings see their ships and know how many they are, they deem they have enough strength gathered there, and take their weapons and lay their ships in the midst betwixt two cliffs, where was a great and deep sound; only on one side could they be set on, and that with but five ships at once. Now Onund was the wisest of men, and bade lay five ships up into the sound, so that he and his might have back way when they would, for there was plenty of sea-room astern. On one board of them too was a certain island, and under the lee thereof he let one ship lie, and his men brought many great stones forth on to the sheer cliffs above, yet might not be seen withal from the ships.

Now the vikings laid their ships boldly enough for the attack, and thought that the others quailed; and Vigbiod asked who they were that were in such jeopardy. Thrand said that he was the

brother of Eyvind the Eastman, "and here beside me is Onund Treefoot my fellow."

Then laughed the vikings, and shouted—

Treefoot, Treefoot, foot of tree,
Trolls take thee and thy company.

"Yea, a sight it is seldom seen of us, that such men should go into battle as have no might over themselves."

Onund said that they could know nought thereof ere it were tried; and withal they laid their ships alongside one of the other, and there began a great fight, and either side did boldly. But when they came to handy blows, Onund gave back toward the cliff, and when the vikings saw this, they deemed he was minded to flee, and made towards his ship, and came as nigh to the cliff as they might. But in that very point of time those came forth on to the edge of the cliff who were appointed so to do, and sent at the vikings so great a flight of stones that they might not withstand it.

Then fell many of the viking-folk, and others were hurt so that they might not bear weapon; and withal they were fain to draw back, and might not, because their ships were even then come into the narrowest of the sound, and they were huddled together both by the ships and the stream; but Onund and his men set on fiercely, whereas Vigbiod was, but Thrand set on Vestmar, and won little thereby; so, when the folk were thinned on Vigbiod's ship, Onund's men and Onund himself got ready to board her: that Vigbiod saw, and cheered on his men without stint: then he turned to meet Onund, and the more part fled before him; but Onund bade his men mark how it went between them; for he was of huge strength. Now they set a log of wood under Onund's knee, so that he stood firmly enow; the viking fought his way forward along the ship till he reached Onund, and he smote at him with his sword, and the stroke took the shield, and sheared off all it met; and then the sword drove into the log that Onund had under his knee, and stuck fast therein; and Vigbiod stooped in drawing it out, and even therewith Onund smote at his shoulder in such wise, that he cut the arm from off him, and then was the viking unmeet for battle.

But when Vestmar knew that his fellow was fallen, he leaped into the furthestmost ship and fled with all those who might reach her. Thereafter they ransacked the fallen men; and by then was Vigbiod nigh to his death: Onund went up to him, and sang—

Yea, seest thou thy wide wounds bleed?
What of shrinking didst thou heed
In the one-foot sling of gold?
What scratch here dost thou behold?
And in e'en such wise as this
Many an axe-breaker there is
Strong of tongue and weak of hand:
Tried thou wert, and might'st not stand.

So there they took much spoil and sailed back to Barra in the autumn.

CHAPTER V.

The summer after this they made ready to fare west to Ireland. But at that time Balk and Hallvard betook themselves from the lands west over the sea, and went out to Iceland, for from thence came tales of land good to choose. Balk settled land in Ramfirth and dwelt at either Balkstead; Hallvard settled Sweepingsfirth, and Hallwick out to the Stair, and dwelt there.

Now Thrand and Onund met Eyvind the Eastman, and he received his brother well; but when he knew that Onund was come with him, then he waxed wroth, and would fain set on him. Thrand bade him do it not, and said that it was not for him to wage war against Northmen, and least of all such men as fared peaceably. Eyvind said that he fared otherwise before, and had broken the peace of Kiarval the King, and that he should now pay for all. Many words the brothers had over this, till Thrand said at last that one fate should befall both him and Onund; and then Eyvind let himself be appeased.

So they dwelt there long that summer, and went on warfare with Eyvind, who found Onund to be the bravest of men. In the autumn they fared to the South-isles, and Eyvind gave to Thrand to take all the heritage of their father, if Biorn should die before Thrand.

Now were the twain in the South-isles until they wedded their wives, and some winters after withal.

CHAPTER VI.

And now it came to pass that Biorn, the father of Thrand, died; and when Grim the hersir hears thereof he went to meet Ondott Crow, and claimed the goods left by Biorn; but Ondott said that Thrand had the heritage after his father; Grim said that Thrand was west over seas, and that Biorn was a Gothlander of kin, and that the king took the heritage of all outland men. Ondott said that he should keep the goods for the hands of Thrand, his daughter's son; and therewith Grim gat him gone, and had nought for his claiming the goods.

Now Thrand had news of his father's death, and straightway got ready to go from the South-isles, and Onund Treefoot with him; but Ufeigh Grettir and Thormod Shaft went out to Iceland with their kith and kin, and came out to the Eres in the south country, and dwelt the first winter with Thorbiorn Salmon-Carle.

Thereafter they settled Gnuþ-Wards'-rape, Ufeigh, the outward part, between Thwart-river and Kalf-river, and he dwelt at Ufeigh's-stead by Stone-holt; but Thormod settled the eastward part, and abode at Shaft-holt.

The daughters of Thormod were these: Thorvor, mother of Thorod the Godi of Hailti, and Thora, mother of Thorstein, the Godi, the father of Biarni the Sage.

Now it is to be said of Thrand and Onund that they sailed from the lands west over the Sea toward Norway, and had fair wind, and such speed, that no rumour of their voyage was abroad till they came to Ondott Crow.

He gave Thrand good welcome, and told him how Grim the hersir had claimed the heritage left by Biorn. "Meeter it seems to me, kinsman," said he, "that thou take the heritage of thy father and not king's-thralls; good luck has befallen thee, in that none knows of thy coming, but it misdoubts me that Grim will come upon one or other of us if he may; therefore I would that thou shouldst take the inheritance to thee, and get thee gone to other lands."

Thrand said that so he would do, he took to him the chattels and got away from Norway at his speediest; but before he sailed into the sea, he asked Onund Treefoot whether he would not make for Iceland with him; Onund said he would first go see his kin and friends in the south country.

Thrand said, "Then must we part now, but I would that thou shouldst aid my kin, for on them will vengeance fall if I get off clear; but to Iceland shall I go, and I would that thou withal shouldst make that journey."

Onund gave his word to all, and they parted in good love. So Thrand went to Iceland, and Ufeigh and Thormod Shaft received him well. Thrand dwelt at Thrand's-holt, which is west of Steer's-river.

CHAPTER VII.

Onund went south to Rogaland, and met there many of his kin and friends; he dwelt there in secret at a man's called Kolbein. Now he heard that the king had taken his lands to him and set a man thereover who was called Harek, who was a farmer of the king's; so on a night Onund went to him, and took him in his house; there Harek was led out and cut down, and Onund took all the chattels they found and burnt the homestead; and thereafter he abode in many places that winter.

But that autumn Grim the hersir slew Ondott Crow, because he might not get the heritage-money for the king; and that same night of his slaying, Signy, his wife, brought aboard ship all her chattels, and fared with her sons, Asmund and Asgrim, to Sighvat her father; but a little after sent her sons to Soknadale to Hedin her foster-father; but that seemed good to them but for a little while, and they would fain go back again to their mother; so they departed and came at Yule-tide to Ingiald the Trusty at Hvin; he took them in because of the urgency of Gyda his wife, and they were there the winter through. But in spring came Onund north to Agdir, because he had heard of the slaying of Ondott Crow; but

when he found Signy he asked her what help she would have of him.

She said that she would fain have vengeance on Grim the hersir for the slaying of Ondott. Then were the sons of Ondott sent for, and when they met Onund Treefoot, they made up one fellowship together, and had spies abroad on the doings of Grim. Now in the summer was a great ale-drinking held at Grim's, because he had bidden to him Earl Audun; and when Onund and the sons of Ondott knew thereof they went to Grim's homestead and laid fire to the house, for they were come there unawares, and burnt Grim the hersir therein, and nigh thirty men, and many good things they took there withal. Then went Onund to the woods, but the sons of Ondott took a boat of Ingiald's, their foster-father's, and rowed away therein, and lay hid a little way off the homestead. Earl Audun came to the feast, even as had been settled afore, and there "missed friend from stead." Then he gathered men to him, and dwelt there some nights, but nought was heard of Onund and his fellows; and the Earl slept in a loft with two men.

Onund had full tidings from the homestead, and sent after those brothers; and, when they met, Onund asked them whether they would watch the farm or fall on the Earl; but they chose to set on the Earl. So they drove beams at the loft-doors and broke them in; then Asmund caught hold of the two who were with the Earl, and cast them down so hard that they were well-nigh slain; but Asgrim ran at the Earl, and bade him render up weregild for his father, since he had been in the plot and the onslaught with Grim the hersir when Ondott Crow was slain. The Earl said he had no money with him there, and prayed for delay of that payment. Then Asgrim set his spear-point to the Earl's breast and bade him pay there and then; so the Earl took a chain from his neck, and three gold rings, and a cloak of rich web, and gave them up. Asgrim took the goods and gave the Earl a name, and called him Audun Goat.

But when the bonders and neighbouring folk were ware that war was come among them, they went abroad and would bring help to the Earl, and a hard fight there was, for Onund had many men, and there fell many good bonders and courtmen of the Earl. Now came the brothers, and told how they had fared with the Earl, and Onund said that it was ill that he was not slain, "that would have been somewhat of a revenge on the King for our loss at his hands of fee and friends." They said that this was a greater shame to the Earl; and therewith they went away up to Sorrelmale to Eric Alefain, a king's lord, and he took them in for all the winter.

Now at Yule they drank turn and turn about with a man called Hallstein, who was bynamed Horse; Eric gave the first feast, well and truly, and then Hallstein gave his, but thereat was there bickering between them, and Hallstein smote Eric with a deer-horn; Eric gat no revenge therefor, but went home straightway. This sore disliked the sons of Ondott, and a little after Asgrim fared to Hallstein's homestead, and went in alone, and gave him a great wound, but those who were therein sprang up and set on Asgrim. Asgrim defended himself well and got out of their hands in the dark; but they deemed they had slain him.

Onund and Asmund heard thereof and supposed him dead, but deemed they might do nought. Eric counselled them to make for Iceland, and said that would be of no avail to abide there in the land (i.e. in Norway), as soon as the king should bring matters about to his liking. So this they did, and made them ready for Iceland and had each one ship. Hallstein lay wounded, and died before Onund and his folk sailed. Kolbein withal, who is afore mentioned, went abroad with Onund.

CHAPTER VIII.

Now Onund and Asmund sailed into the sea when they were ready, and held company together; then sang Onund this stave—

Meet was I in days ago
For storm, wherein the Sweeping One,
Midst rain of swords, and the darts' breath,
Blew o'er all a gale of death.
Now a maimed, one-footed man
On rollers' steed through waters wan
Out to Iceland must I go;
Ah, the skald is sinking low.

They had a hard voyage of it and much of baffling gales from the south, and drove north into the main; but they made Iceland, and were by then come to the north off Longness when they found where they were: so little space there was betwixt them that they spake together; and Asmund said that they had best sail to Islefirth, and thereto they both agreed; then they beat up toward the land, and a south-east wind sprang up; but when Onund and his folk laid the ship close to the wind, the yard was sprung; then they took in sail, and therewith were driven off to sea; but Asmund got under the lee of Brakeisle, and there lay till a fair wind brought him into Islefirth; Helgi the Lean gave him all Kraeklings' lithe, and he dwelt at South Glass-river; Asgrim his brother came out some winters later and abode at North Glass-river; he was the father of Ellida-Grim, the father of Asgrim Ellida-Grimson.

CHAPTER IX.

Now it is to be told of Onund Treefoot that he drave out to sea for certain days, but at last the wind got round to the north, and they sailed for land: then those knew who had been there before that they had come west off the Skagi; then they sailed into Strand-Bay, and near to the South-Strands, and there rowed toward them six men in a ten-oared boat, who hailed the big ship, and asked who was their captain; Onund named himself, and asked whence they came; they said they were house-carles of Thorvald, from Drangar; Onund asked if all land through the Strands had been settled; they said there was little unsettled in the inner Strands, and none north thereof. Then Onund asked his shipmates, whether they would make for the west country, or take such as they had been told of; they chose to view the land first. So they sailed in up the bay, and brought to in a creek off Arness, then put forth a boat and rowed to land. There dwelt a rich man, Eric Snare, who had taken land betwixt Ingolfs-firth, and Ufoera in Fishless; but when Eric knew that Onund was come there, he bade him take of his hands whatso he would, but said that there was little that had not been settled before. Onund said he would first see what there was, so they went landward south past some firths, till they came to Ufoera; then said Eric, "Here is what there is to look to; all from here is unsettled, and right in to the settlements of Biorn." Now a great mountain went down the eastern side of the firth, and snow had fallen thereon, Onund looked on that mountain, and sang—

Brand-whetter's life awry doth go,
Fair lands and wide full well I know;
Fair house, and field, and fold of man,
The swift steed of the rollers ran:
My lands, and kin, I left behind,
That I this latter day might find,
Coldback for sunny meads to have;
Hard fate a bitter bargain drave.

Eric answered, "Many have lost so much in Norway, that it may not be bettered: and I think withal that most lands in the main-settlements are already settled, and therefore I urge thee not to go from hence; but I shall hold to what I spake, that thou mayst have whatso of my lands seems meet to thee." Onund said, that he would take that offer, and so he settled land out from Ufoera over the three creeks, Byrgis Creek, Kolbein's Creek, and Coldback Creek, up to Coldback Cleft. Thereafter Eric gave him all Fishless, and Reekfirth, and all Reekness, out on that side of the firth; but as to drifts there was nought set forth, for they were then so plentiful that every man had of them what he would. Now Onund set up a household at Coldback, and had many men about him; but when his goods began to grow great he had another stead in Reekfirth. Kolbein dwelt at Kolbein's Creek. So Onund abode in peace for certain winters.

CHAPTER X.

Now Onund was so brisk a man, that few, even of whole men, could cope with him; and his name withal was well known throughout the land, because of his forefathers. After these things, befell that strife betwixt Ufeigh Grettir and Thorbiorn Earl's-champion, which had such ending, that Ufeigh fell before Thorbiorn in Grettir's-Gill, near Heel. There were many drawn together to the sons of Ufeigh concerning the blood-suit, and Onund Treefoot was sent for, and rode south in the spring, and guested

at Hvamm, with Aud the Deeply-wealthy, and she gave him exceeding good welcome, because he had been with her west over the Sea. In those days, Olaf Feilan, her son's son, was a man full grown, and Aud was by then worn with great eld; she bade Onund know that she would have Olaf, her kinsman, married, and was fain that he should woo Aldis of Barra, who was cousin to Asa, whom Onund had to wife. Onund deemed the matter hopeful, and Olaf rode south with him. So when Onund met his friends and kin-in-law they bade him abide with them: then was the suit talked over, and was laid to Kialarnes Thing, for as then the Al-thing was not yet set up. So the case was settled by umpiredom, and heavy weregild came for the slayings, and Thorbiorn Earl's-champion was outlawed. His son was Solmund, the father of Kari the Singed; father and son dwelt abroad a long time afterwards.

Thrand bade Onund and Olaf to his house, and so did Thor-mod Shaft, and they backed Olaf's wooing, which was settled with ease, because men knew how mighty a woman Aud was. So the bargain was made, and, so much being done, Onund rode home, and Aud thanked him well for his help to Olaf. That autumn Olaf Feilan wedded Aldis of Barra; and then died Aud the Deeply-wealthy, as is told in the story of the Laxdale men.

CHAPTER XI.

Onund and Asa had two sons; the elder was called Thorgeir, the younger Ufeigh Grettir; but Asa soon died. Thereafter Onund got to wife a woman called Thordis, the daughter of Thorgrim, from Gnuip in Midfirth, and akin to Midfirth Skeggi. Of her Onund had a son called Thorgrim; he was early a big man, and a strong, wise, and good withal in matters of husbandry. Onund dwelt on at Coldback till he was old, then he died in his bed, and is buried in Treefoot's barrow; he was the briskest and lithest of one-footed men who have ever lived in Iceland.

Now Thorgrim took the lead among the sons of Onund, though others of them were older than he; but when he was twenty-five years old he grew grey-haired, and therefore was he by-named Greypate; Thordis, his mother, was afterwards wedded north in Willowdale, to Audun Skokul, and their son was Asgeir, of Asgeir's-River. Thorgrim Greypate and his brothers had great possessions in common, nor did they divide the goods between them. Now Eric, who farmed at Arness, as is aforesaid, had to wife Alof, daughter of Ingolf, of Ingolfs-firth; and Flosi was the name of their son, a hopeful man, and of many friends. In those days three brothers came out hither, Ingolf, Ufeigh, and Eyvind, and settled those three firths that are known by their names, and there dwelt afterwards. Olaf was the name of Eyvind's son, he first dwelt at Eyvind's-firth, and after at Drangar, and was a man to hold his own well.

Now there was no strife betwixt these men while their elders were alive; but when Eric died, it seemed to Flosi, that those of Coldback had no lawful title to the lands which Eric had given to Onund; and from this befell much ill-blood betwixt them; but Thorgrim and his kin still held their lands as before, but they might not risk having sports together. Now Thorgeir was head-man of the household of those brothers in Reekfirth, and would ever be rowing out a-fishing, because in those days were the firths full of fish; so those in the Creek made up their plot; a man there was, a house-carle of Flosi in Arness, called Thorfin, him Flosi sent for Thorgeir's head, and he went and hid himself in the boat-stand; that morning, Thorgeir got ready to row out to sea, and two men with him, one called Hamund, the other Brand. Thorgeir went first, and had on his back a leather bottle and drink therein. It was very dark, and as he walked down from the boat-stand Thorfin ran at him, and smote him with an axe betwixt the shoulders, and the axe sank in, and the bottle squeaked, but he let go the axe, for he deemed that there would be little need of binding up, and would save himself as swiftly as might be; and it is to be told of him that he ran off to Arness, and came there before broad day, and told of Thorgeir's slaying, and said that he should have need of Flosi's shelter, and that the only thing to be done was to offer atonement, "for that of all things," said he, "is like to better our strait, great as it has now grown."

Flosi said that he would first hear tidings; "and I am minded to

think that thou art afraid after thy big deed."

Now it is to be said of Thorgeir, that he turned from the blow as the axe smote the bottle, nor had he any wound; they made no search for the man because of the dark, so they rowed over the firths to Coldback, and told tidings of what had happened; thereat folk made much mocking, and called Thorgeir, Bottleback, and that was his by-name ever after.

And this was sung withal—

The brave men of days of old,
Whereof many a tale is told,
Bathed the whiting of the shield,
In wounds' house on battle-field;
But the honour-missing fool,
Both sides of his slaying tool,
Since faint heart his hand made vain.
With but curdled milk must stain.

CHAPTER XII.

In those days befell such hard times in Iceland, that nought like them has been known there; well-nigh all gettings from the sea, and all drifts, came to an end; and this went on for many seasons. One autumn certain chapmen in a big ship were drifted thither, and were wrecked there in the Creek, and Flosi took to him four or five of them; Stein was the name of their captain; they were housed here and there about the Creek, and were minded to build them a new ship from the wreck; but they were unhandy herein, and the ship was over small stem and stern, but over big amidships.

That spring befell a great storm from the north, which lasted near a week, and after the storm men looked after their drifts. Now there was a man called Thorstein, who dwelt at Reekness; he found a whale driven up on the firthward side of the ness, at a place called Rib-Skerries, and the whale was a big whale.

Thorstein sent forthwith a messenger to Wick to Flosi, and so to the highest farm-steads. Now Einar was the name of the farmer at Combe, and he was a tenant of those of Coldback, and had the ward of their drifts on that side of the firths; and now withal he was ware of the stranding of the whale: and he took boat and rowed past the firths to Byrgis Creek, whence he sent a man to Coldback; and when Thorgrim and his brothers heard that, they got ready at their swiftest, and were twelve in a ten-oared boat, and Kolbein's sons fared with them, Ivar and Leif, and were six altogether; and all farmers who could bring it about went to the whale.

Now it is to be told of Flosi that he sent to his kin in Ingolf's-firth and Ufeigh's-firth, and for Olaf Eyvindson, who then dwelt at Drangar; and Flosi came first to the whale, with the men of Wick, then they fell to cutting up the whale, and what was cut was forthwith sent ashore; near twenty men were thereat at first, but soon folk came thronging thither.

Therewith came those of Coldback in four boats, and Thorgrim laid claim to the whale and forbade the men of Wick to shear, allot, or carry off aught thereof: Flosi bade him show if Eric had given Onund Treefoot the drift in clear terms, or else he said he should defend himself with arms. Thorgrim thought he and his too few, and would not risk an onset; but therewithal came a boat rowing up the firth, and the rowers therein pulled smartly. Soon they came up, and there was Swan, from Knoll in Biornfirth, and his house-carles; and straightway, when he came, he bade Thorgrim not to let himself be robbed; and great friends they had been heretofore, and now Swan offered his aid. The brothers said they would take it, and therewith set on fiercely; Thorgeir Bottleback first mounted the whale against Flosi's house-carles; there the aforementioned Thorfin was cutting the whale, he was in front nigh the head, and stood in a foot-hold he had cut for himself; then Thorgeir said, "Herewith I bring thee back thy axe," and smote him on the neck, and struck off his head.

Flosi was up on the foreshore when he saw that, and he egged on his men to meet them hardily; now they fought long together, but those of Coldback had the best of it: few men there had weapons except the axes wherewith they were cutting up the whale, and some choppers. So the men of Wick gave back to the foreshores; the Eastmen had weapons, and many a wound they gave; Stein, the captain, smote a foot off Ivar Kolbeinson, but

Leif, Ivar's brother, beat to death a fellow of Stein's with a whale-rib; blows were dealt there with whatever could be caught at, and men fell on either side. But now came up Olaf and his men from Drangar in many boats, and gave help to Flosi, and then those of Coldback were borne back overpowered; but they had loaded their boats already, and Swan bade get aboard and thitherward they gave back, and the men of Wick came on after them; and when Swan was come down to the sea, he smote at Stein, the sea-captain, and gave him a great wound, and then leapt aboard his boat; Thorgrim wounded Flosi with a great wound and therewith got away; Olaf cut at Ufeigh Grettir, and wounded him to death; but Thorgeir caught Ufeigh up and leapt aboard with him. Now those of Coldback row east by the firths, and thus they parted; and this was sung of their meeting—

At Rib-skerries, I hear folk tell,
A hard and dreadful fray befell,
For men unarmed upon that day
With strips of whale-fat made good play.
Fierce steel-gods these in turn did meet
With blubber-slices nowise sweet;
Certes a wretched thing it is
To tell of squabbles such as this.

After these things was peace settled between them, and these suits were laid to the Althing; there Thorod the Godi and Midfirth-Skeggi, with many of the south-country folk, aided those of Coldback; Flosi was outlawed, and many of those who had been with him; and his moneys were greatly drained because he chose to pay up all weregild himself. Thorgrim and his folk could not show that they had paid money for the lands and drifts which Flosi claimed. Thorkel Moon was lawman then, and he was bidden to give his decision; he said that to him it seemed law, that something had been paid for those lands, though mayhap not their full worth; "For so did Steinvor the Old to Ingolf, my grandfather, that she had from him all Rosmwhale-ness and gave therefor a spotted cloak, nor has that gift been voided, though certes greater flaws be therein: but here I lay down my rede," said he, "that the land be shared, and that both sides have equal part therein; and henceforth be it made law, that each man have the drifts before his own lands." Now this was done, and the land was so divided that Thorgrim and his folk had to give up Reekfirth and all the lands by the firth-side, but Combe they were to keep still. Ufeigh was atoned with a great sum; Thorfin was unatoned, and boot was given to Thorgeir for the attack on his life; and thereafter were they set at one together. Flosi took ship for Norway with Stein, the ship-master, and sold his lands in the Wick to Geirmund Hiuka-timber, who dwelt there afterwards. Now that ship which the chapmen had made was very broad of beam, so that men called it the Treetub, and by that name is the creek known: but in that keel did Flosi go out, but was driven back to Axefirth, whereof came the tale of Bodmod, and Grimulf, and Gerpir.

CHAPTER XIII.

Now after this the brothers Thorgrim and Thorgeir shared their possessions. Thorgrim took the chattels and Thorgeir the land; Thorgrim betook himself to Midfirth and bought land at Biarg by the counsel of Skeggi; he had to wife Thordis, daughter of Asmund of Asmund's-peak, who had settled the Thingere lands: Thorgrim and Thordis had a son who was called Asmund; he was a big man and a strong, wise withal, and the fairest-haired of men, but his head grew grey early, wherefore he was called Asmund the Grey-haired. Thorgrim grew to be a man very busy about his household, and kept all his well to their work. Asmund would do but little work, so the father and son had small fellowship together; and so things fared till Asmund had grown of age; then he asked his father for travelling money; Thorgrim said he should have little enough, but gave him somewhat of huckstering wares.

Then Asmund went abroad, and his goods soon grew great; he sailed to sundry lands, and became the greatest of merchants, and very rich; he was a man well beloved and trusty, and many kinsmen he had in Norway of great birth.

One autumn he guested east in the Wick with a great man who was called Thorstein; he was an Uplander of kin, and had a sister called Ranveig, one to be chosen before all women; her Asmund

wooded, and gained her by the help of Thorstein her brother; and there Asmund dwelt a while and was held in good esteem: he had of Ranveig a son high Thorstein, strong, and the fairest of men, and great of voice; a man tall of growth he was, but somewhat slow in his mien, and therefore was he called Dromund. Now when Thorstein was nigh grown up, his mother fell sick and died, and thereafter Asmund had no joy in Norway; the kin of Thorstein's mother took his goods, and him withal to foster; but Asmund betook himself once more to seafaring, and became a man of great renown. Now he brought his ship into Hunawater, and in those days was Thorkel Krafla chief over the Waterdale folk; and he heard of Asmund's coming out, and rode to the ship and bade Asmund to his house; and he dwelt at Marstead in Waterdale; so Asmund went to be guest there. This Thorkel was the son of Thorgrim the Godi of Cornriver, and was a very wise man.

Now this was after the coming out of Bishop Frederick, and Thorvald Kodran's son, and they dwelt at the Brooks-meet, when these things came to pass: they were the first to preach the law of Christ in the north country; Thorkel let himself be signed with the cross and many men with him, and things enow betid betwixt the bishop and the north-country folk which come not into this tale.

Now at Thorkel's was a woman brought up, Asdis by name, who was the daughter of Bard, the son of Jokul, the son of Ingimund the Old, the son of Thorstein, the son of Ketil the Huge: the mother of Asdis was Aldis the daughter of Ufeigh Grettir, as is aforesaid; Asdis was as yet unwedded, and was deemed the best match among women, both for her kin and her possessions; Asmund was grown weary of seafaring, and was fain to take up his abode in Iceland; so he took up the word, and wooed this woman. Thorkel knew well all his ways, that he was a rich man and of good counsel to hold his wealth; so that came about, that Asmund got Asdis to wife; he became a bosom friend of Thorkel, and a great dealer in matters of farming, cunning in the law, and far-reaching. And now a little after this Thorgrim Greypate died at Biarg, and Asmund took the heritage after him and dwelt there.

HERE BEGINS THE STORY OF THE LIFE OF GRETTIR THE STRONG

CHAPTER XIV. Of Grettir as a child, and his froward ways with his father

Asmund the Greyhaired kept house at Biarg; great and proud was his household, and many men he had about him, and was a man much beloved. These were the children of him and Asdis. Atli was the eldest son; a man yielding and soft-natured, easy, and meek withal, and all men liked him well: another son they had called Grettir; he was very froward in his childhood; of few words, and rough; worrying both in word and deed. Little fondness he got from his father Asmund, but his mother loved him right well.

Grettir Asmundson was fair to look on, broad-faced, short-faced, red-haired, and much freckled; not of quick growth in his childhood.

Thordis was a daughter of Asmund, whom Glum, the son of Uspak, the son of Kiarlak of Skridinsenni, afterwards had to wife. Ranveig was another daughter of Asmund; she was the wife of Gamli, the son of Thorhal, the son of the Vendlander; they kept house at Meals in Ramfirth; their son was Grim. The son of Glum and Thordis, the daughter of Asmund, was Uspak, who quarrelled with Odd, the son of Ufeigh, as is told in the Bandamanna Saga.

Grettir grew up at Biarg till he was ten years old; then he began to get on a little; but Asmund bade him do some work; Grettir answered that work was not right meet for him, but asked what he should do.

Says Asmund, "Thou shalt watch my home-geese."

Grettir answered and said, "A mean work, a milksop's work."

Asmund said, "Turn it well out of hand, and then matters shall get better between us."

Then Grettir betook himself to watching the home-geese; fifty of them there were, with many goslings; but no long time went by before he found them a troublesome drove, and the goslings slow-paced withal. Thereat he got sore worried, for little did he keep his

temper in hand. So some time after this, wayfaring men found the goslings strewn about dead, and the home-geese broken-winged; and this was in autumn. Asmund was mightily vexed hereat, and asked if Grettir had killed the fowl: he sneered mockingly, and answered—

Surely as winter comes, shall I
Twist the goslings' necks awry.
If in like case are the geese,
I have finished each of these.

"Thou shalt kill them no more," said Asmund.

"Well, a friend should warn a friend of ill," said Grettir.

"Another work shall be found for thee then," said Asmund.

"More one knows the more one tries," said Grettir; "and what shall I do now?"

Asmund answered, "Thou shalt rub my back at the fire, as I have been wont to have it done."

"Hot for the hand, truly," said Grettir; "but still a milksop's work."

Now Grettir went on with this work for a while; but autumn came on, and Asmund became very fain of heat, and he spurs Grettir on to rub his back briskly. Now, in those times there were wont to be large fire-halls at the homesteads, wherein men sat at long fires in the evenings; boards were set before the men there, and afterwards folk slept out sideways from the fires; there also women worked at the wool in the daytime. Now, one evening, when Grettir had to rub Asmund's back, the old carle said,—

"Now thou wilt have to put away thy sloth, thou milk-sop."

Says Grettir, "*Ill is it to goad the foolhardy.*"

Asmund answers, "Thou wilt ever be a good-for-nought."

Now Grettir sees where, in one of the seats stood wool-combs: one of these he caught up, and let it go all down Asmund's back. He sprang up, and was mad wroth thereat; and was going to smite Grettir with his staff, but he ran off. Then came the housewife, and asked what was this to-do betwixt them. Then Grettir answered by this ditty—

This jewel-strewer, O ground of gold,
(His counsels I deem over bold),
On both these hands that trouble sow,
(Ah bitter pain) will burn me now;
Therefore with wool-comb's nails unshorn
Somewhat ring-strewer's back is torn:
The hook-clawed bird that wrought his wound,—
Lo, now I see it on the ground.

Hereupon was his mother sore vexed, that he should have taken to a trick like this; she said he would never fail to be the most reckless of men. All this nowise bettered matters between Asmund and Grettir.

Now, some time after this, Asmund had a talk with Grettir, that he should watch his horses. Grettir said this was more to his mind than the back-rubbing.

"Then shalt thou do as I bid thee," said Asmund. "I have a dun mare, which I call Keingala; she is so wise as to shifts of weather, thaws, and the like, that rough weather will never fail to follow, when she will not go out on grazing. At such times thou shalt lock the horses up under cover; but keep them to grazing on the mountain neck yonder, when winter comes on. Now I shall deem it needful that thou turn this work out of hand better than the two I have set thee to already."

Grettir answered, "This is a cold work and a manly, but I deem it ill to trust in the mare, for I know none who has done it yet."

Now Grettir took to the horse-watching, and so the time went on till past Yule-time; then came on much cold weather with snow, that made grazing hard to come at. Now Grettir was ill clad, and as yet little hardened, and he began to be starved by the cold; but Keingala grazed away in the windiest place she could find, let the weather be as rough as it would. Early as she might go to the pasture, never would she go back to stable before nightfall. Now Grettir deemed that he must think of some scurvy trick or other, that Keingala might be paid in full for her way of grazing: so, one morning early, he comes to the horse-stable, opens it, and finds Keingala standing all along before the crib; for, whatever food was given to the horses with her, it was her way to get it all to herself. Grettir got on her back, and had a sharp knife in

his hand, and drew it right across Keingala's shoulder, and then all along both sides of the back. Thereat the mare, being both fat and shy, gave a mad bound, and kicked so fiercely, that her hooves clattered against the wall. Grettir fell off; but, getting on his legs, strove to mount her again. Now their struggle is of the sharpest, but the end of it is, that he flays off the whole of the strip along the back to the loins. Thereafter he drove the horses out on grazing; Keingala would bite but at her back, and when noon was barely past, she started off, and ran back to the house. Grettir now locks the stable and goes home. Asmund asked Grettir where the horses were. He said that he had stabled them as he was wont. Asmund said that rough weather was like to be at hand, as the horses would not keep at their grazing in such good weather as now it was.

Grettir said, "*Oft fail in wisdom folk of better trust.*"

Now the night goes by, but no rough weather came on. Grettir drove off the horses, but Keingala cannot bear the grazing. This seemed strange to Asmund, as the weather changed in nowise from what it had been theretofore. The third morning Asmund went to the horses, and, coming to Keingala, said,—

"I must needs deem these horses to be in sorry case, good as the winter has been, but thy sides will scarce lack flesh, my dun."

"*Things boded will happen,*" said Grettir, "*but so will things unboded.*"

Asmund stroked the back of the mare, and, lo, the hide came off beneath his hand; he wondered how this could have happened, and said it was likely to be Grettir's doing. Grettir sneered mockingly, but said nought. Now Goodman Asmund went home talking as one mad; he went straight to the fire-hall, and as he came heard the good wife say, "It were good indeed if the horse-keeping of my kinsman had gone off well."

Then Asmund sang this stave—

Grettir has in such wise played,
That Keingala has he flayed,
Whose trustiness would be my boast
(Proudest women talk the most);
So the cunning lad has wrought,
Thinking thereby to do nought
Of my biddings any more.
In thy mind turn these words o'er.

The housewife answered, "I know not which is least to my mind, that thou shouldst ever be bidding him work, or that he should turn out all his work in one wise."

"That too we will make an end of," said Asmund, "but he shall fare the worse therefor."

Then Grettir said, "Well, let neither make words about it to the other."

So things went on awhile, and Asmund had Keingala killed; and many other scurvy tricks did Grettir in his childhood whereof the story says nought. But he grew great of body, though his strength was not well known, for he was unskilled in wrestling; he would make ditties and rhymes, but was somewhat scurrilous therein. He had no will to lie a night in the fire-hall and was mostly of few words.

CHAPTER XV. Of the ball-play on Midfirth Water

At this time there were many growing up to be men in Midfirth; Skald-Torfa dwelt at Torfa's stead in those days; her son was called Bessi, he was the shapeliest of men and a good skald.

At Meal lived two brothers, Kormak and Thorgils, with them a man called Odd was fostered, and was called the Foundling-skald.

One called Audun was growing up at Audunstead in Willowdale, he was a kind and good man to deal with, and the strongest in those north parts, of all who were of an age with him. Kalf Asgeirson dwelt at Asgeir's-river, and his brother Thorvald with him. Atli also, Grettir's brother, was growing into a ripe man at that time; the gentlest of men he was, and well beloved of all. Now these men settled to have ball-play together on Midfirth Water; thither came the Midfirthers, and Willowdale men, and men from Westhope, and Waterness, and Ramfirth, but those who came from far abode at the play-stead.

Now those who were most even in strength were paired together, and thereat was always the greatest sport in autumn-tide.

But when he was fourteen years old Grettir went to the plays, because he was prayed thereto by his brother Atli.

Now were all paired off for the plays, and Grettir was allotted to play against Audun, the aforementioned, who was some winters the eldest of the two; Audun struck the ball over Grettir's head, so that he could not catch it, and it bounded far away along the ice; Grettir got angry thereat, deeming that Audun would outplay him; but he fetches the ball and brings it back, and, when he was within reach of Audun, hurls it right against his forehead, and smites him so that the skin was broken; then Audun struck at Grettir with the bat he held in his hand, but smote him no hard blow, for Grettir ran in under the stroke; and thereat they seized one another with arms clasped, and wrestled. Then all saw that Grettir was stronger than he had been taken to be, for Audun was a man full of strength.

A long tug they had of it, but the end was that Grettir fell, and Audun thrust his knees against his belly and breast, and dealt hardly with him.

Then Atli and Bessi and many others ran up and parted them; but Grettir said there was no need to hold him like a mad dog, "For," said he, "*thralls wreak themselves at once, dastards never.*"

This men suffered not to grow into open strife, for the brothers, Kalf and Thorvald, were fain that all should be at one again, and Audun and Grettir were somewhat akin withal; so the play went on as before, nor did anything else befall to bring about strife.

CHAPTER XVI. Of the slaying of Skeggi

Now Thorkel Krafla got very old; he had the rule of Waterdale and was a great man. He was bosom friend of Asmund the Grey-haired, as was beseeing for the sake of their kinship; he was wont to ride to Biarg every year and see his kin there, nor did he fail herein the spring following these matters just told. Asmund and Asdis welcomed him most heartily, he was there three nights, and many things did the kinsmen speak of between them. Now Thorkel asked Asmund what his mind foreboded him about his sons, as to what kind of craft they would be likely to take to. Asmund said that he thought Atli would be a great man at farming, foreseeing, and money-making. Thorkel answered, "A useful man and like unto thyself: but what dost thou say of Grettir?"

Asmund said, "Of him I say, that he will be a strong man and an unruly, and, certes, of wrathful mood, and heavy enough he has been to me."

Thorkel answered, "That bodes no good, friend; but how shall we settle about our riding to the Thing next summer?"

Asmund answered, "I am growing heavy for wayfaring, and would fain sit at home."

"Wouldst thou that Atli go in thy stead?" said Thorkel.

"I do not see how I could spare him," says Asmund, "because of the farm-work and ingathering of household stores; but now Grettir will not work, yet he bears about that wit with him that I deem he will know how to keep up the showing forth of the law for me through thy aid."

"Well, thou shall have thy will," said Thorkel, and withal he rode home when he was ready, and Asmund let him go with good gifts.

Some time after this Thorkel made him ready to ride to the Thing, he rode with sixty men, for all went with him who were in his rule: thus he came to Biarg, and therefrom rode Grettir with him.

Now they rode south over the heath that is called Two-days'-ride; but on this mountain the baiting grounds were poor, therefore they rode fast across it down to the settled lands, and when they came down to Fleet-tongue they thought it was time to sleep, so they took the bridles off their horses and let them graze with the saddles on. They lay sleeping till far on in the day, and when they woke, the men went about looking for their horses; but they had gone each his own way, and some of them had been rolling; but Grettir was the last to find his horse.

Now it was the wont in those days that men should carry their own victuals when they rode to the Althing, and most bore meal-bags athwart their saddles; and the saddle was turned under the belly of Grettir's horse, and the meal-bag was gone, so he goes and searches, and finds nought.

Just then he sees a man running fast, Grettir asks who it is who is running there; the man answered that his name was Skeggi, and that he was a house-carle from the Ridge in Waterdale. "I am one of the following of goodman Thorkel," he says, "but, faring heedlessly, I have lost my meal-bag."

Grettir said, "*Odd haps are worst haps*, for I, also, have lost the meal-sack which I owned, and now let us search both together."

This Skeggi liked well, and a while they go thus together; but all of a sudden Skeggi bounded off up along the moors and caught up a meal-sack. Grettir saw him stoop, and asked what he took up there.

"My meal-sack," says Skeggi.

"Who speaks to that besides thyself?" says Grettir; "let me see it, for many a thing has its like."

Skeggi said that no man should take from him what was his own; but Grettir caught at the meal-bag, and now they tug one another along with the meal-sack between them, both trying hard to get the best of it.

"It is to be wondered at," says the house-carle, "that ye Waterdale men should deem, that because other men are not as wealthy as ye, that they should not therefore dare to hold aught of their own in your despite."

Grettir said, that it had nought to do with the worth of men that each should have his own.

Skeggi answers, "Too far off is Audun now to throttle thee as at that ball-play."

"Good," said Grettir; "but, howsoever that went, thou at least shall never throttle me."

Then Skeggi got at his axe and hewed at Grettir; when Grettir saw that, he caught the axe-handle with the left hand bladeward of Skeggi's hand, so hard that straightway was the axe loosed from his hold. Then Grettir drave that same axe into his head so that it stood in the brain, and the house-carle fell dead to earth. Then Grettir seized the meal-bag and threw it across his saddle, and thereon rode after his fellows.

Now Thorkel rode ahead of all, for he had no misgiving of such things befalling: but men missed Skeggi from the company, and when Grettir came up they asked him what he knew of Skeggi; then he sang—

A rock-troll her weight did throw
At Skeggi's throat a while ago;
Over the battle ogress ran
The red blood of the serving-man;
Her deadly iron mouth did gape
Above him, till clean out of shape
She tore his head and let out life:
And certainly I saw their strife.

Then Thorkel's men sprung up and said that surely trolls had not taken the man in broad daylight. Thorkel grew silent, but said presently, "The matter is likely to be quite other than this; methinks Grettir has in all likelihood killed him, or what could befall?"

Then Grettir told all their strife. Thorkel says, "This has come to pass most unluckily, for Skeggi was given to my following, and was, natless, a man of good kin; but I shall deal thus with the matter: I shall give boot for the man as the doom goes, but the outlawry I may not settle. Now, two things thou hast to choose between, Grettir; whether thou wilt rather go to the Thing and risk the turn of matters, or go back home."

Grettir chose to go to the Thing, and thither he went. But a lawsuit was set on foot by the heirs of the slain man: Thorkel gave handsel, and paid up all fines, but Grettir must needs be outlawed, and keep abroad three winters.

Now when the chiefs rode from the Thing, they baited under Sledgehill before they parted: then Grettir lifted a stone which now lies there in the grass and is called Grettir's-heave; but many men came up to see the stone, and found it a great wonder that so young a man should heave aloft such a huge rock.

Now Grettir rode home to Biarg and tells the tale of his journey; Asmund let out little thereon, but said that he would turn out an unruly man.

CHAPTER XVII. Of Grettir's voyage out

There was a man called Hafliði, who dwelt at Reyðarfell in Whiteriverside, he was a seafaring man and had a sailing ship, which lay up Whiteriver: there was a man on board his ship, hight Bard, who had a wife with him young and fair. Asmund sent a man to Hafliði, praying him to take Grettir and look after him; Hafliði said that he had heard that the man was ill ruled of mood; yet for the sake of the friendship between him and Asmund he took Grettir to himself, and made ready for sailing abroad.

Asmund would give to his son no faring-goods but victuals for the voyage and a little wadmall. Grettir prayed him for some weapon, but Asmund answered, "Thou hast not been obedient to me, nor do I know how far thou art likely to work with weapons things that may be of any gain; and no weapon shalt thou have of me."

"*No deed no reward*," says Grettir. Then father and son parted with little love. Many there were who bade Grettir farewell, but few bade him come back.

But his mother brought him on his road, and before they parted she spoke thus, "Thou art not fitted out from home, son, as I fain would thou wert, a man so well born as thou; but, meseems, the greatest shortcoming herein is that thou hast no weapons of any avail, and my mind misgives me that thou wilt perchance need them sorely."

With that she took out from under her cloak a sword well wrought, and a fair thing it was, and then she said, "This sword was owned by Jokul, my father's father, and the earlier Waterdale men, and it gained them many a day; now I give thee the sword, and may it stand thee in good stead."

Grettir thanked her well for this gift, and said he deemed it better than things of more worth; then he went on his way, and Asdis wished him all good hap.

Now Grettir rode south over the heath, and made no stay till he came to the ship. Hafliði gave him a good welcome and asked him for his faring-goods, then Grettir sang—

Rider of wind-driven steed,
Little gat I to my need,
When I left my fair birth-stead,
From the snatchers of worm's bed;
But this man's-bane hanging here,
Gift of woman good of cheer,
Proves the old saw said not ill,
Best to bairn is mother still.

Hafliði said it was easily seen that she thought the most of him. But now they put to sea when they were ready, and had wind at will; but when they had got out over all shallows they hoisted sail.

Now Grettir made a den for himself under the boat, from whence he would move for nought, neither for baling, nor to do aught at the sail, nor to work at what he was bound to work at in the ship in even shares with the other men, neither would he buy himself off from the work.

Now they sailed south by Reekness and then south from the land; and when they lost land they got much heavy sea; the ship was somewhat leaky, and scarce seaworthy in heavy weather, therefore they had it wet enough. Now Grettir let fly his biting rhymes, whereat the men got sore wroth. One day, when it so happened that the weather was both squally and cold, the men called out to Grettir, and bade him now do manfully, "For," said they, "now our claws grow right cold." Grettir looked up and said—

Good luck, scurvy starvelings, if I should behold
Each finger ye have doubled up with the cold.

And no work they got out of him, and now it misliked them of their lot as much again as before, and they said that he should pay with his skin for his rhymes and the lawlessness which he did. "Thou art more fain," said they, "of playing with Bard the mate's wife than doing thy duty on board ship, and this is a thing not to be borne at all."

The gale grew greater steadily, and now they stood baling for days and nights together, and all swore to kill Grettir. But when Hafliði heard this, he went up to where Grettir lay, and said, "Methinks the bargain between thee and the chapmen is scarcely fair; first thou dost by them unlawfully, and thereafter thou castest thy

rhymes at them; and now they swear that they will throw thee overboard, and this is unseemly work to go on."

"Why should they not be free to do as they will?" says Grettir; "but I well would that one or two of them tarry here behind with me, or ever I go overboard."

Hafliði says, "Such deeds are not to be done, and we shall never thrive if ye rush into such madness; but I shall give thee good rede."

"What is that?" says Grettir.

"They blame thee for singing ill things of them; now, therefore, I would that thou sing some scurvy rhyme to me, for then it might be that they would bear with thee the easier."

"To thee I never sing but good," says Grettir: "I am not going to make thee like these starvelings."

"One may sing so," says Hafliði, "that the lampoon be not so foul when it is searched into, though at first sight it be not over fair."

"I have ever plenty of that skill in me," says Grettir.

Then Hafliði went to the men where they were baling, and said, "Great is your toil, and no wonder that ye have taken ill liking to Grettir."

"But his lampoons we deem worse than all the rest together," they said.

Hafliði said in a loud voice, "He will surely fare ill for it in the end."

But when Grettir heard Hafliði speak blamefully of him, he sang—

Otherwise would matters be,
When this shouting Hafliði
Ate in house at Reyðarfell
Curdled milk, and deemed it well;
He who decks the reindeer's side
That 'twixt ness and ness doth glide,
Twice in one day had his fill
Of the feast of dart shower shrill.

The shipmen thought this foul enough, and said he should not put shame on Skipper Hafliði for nought.

Then said Hafliði, "Grettir is plentifully worthy that ye should do him some shame, but I will not have my honour staked against his ill-will and recklessness; nor is it good for us to wreak vengeance for this forthwith while we have this danger hanging over us; but be ye mindful of it when ye land, if so it seem good to you."

"Well," they said, "why should we not fare even as thou farest? for why should his vile word bite us more than thee?"

And in that mind Hafliði bade them abide; and thence-forward the chapmen made far less noise about Grettir's rhymes than before.

Now a long and a hard voyage they had, and the leak gained on the ship, and men began to be exceeding worn with toil. The young wife of the mate was wont to sew from Grettir's hands, and much would the crew mock him therefor; but Hafliði went up to where Grettir lay and sang—

Grettir, stand up from thy grave,
In the trough of the grey wave
The keel labours, tell my say
Now unto thy merry may;
From thy hands the linen-clad
Fill of sewing now has had,
Till we make the land will she
Deem that labour fitteth thee.

Then Grettir stood up and sang—

Stand we up, for neath us now
Rides the black ship high enow;
This fair wife will like it ill
If my limbs are laid here still;
Certes, the white trothful one
Will not deem the deed well done,
If the work that I should share
Other folk must ever bear.

Then he ran aft to where they were baling, and asked what they would he should do; they said he would do mighty little good.

"Well," said he, "*ye may yet be apaid of a man's aid.*"

Hafliði bade them not set aside his help, "For it may be he shall deem his hands freed if he offers his aid."

At that time pumping was not used in ships that fared over the main; the manner of baling they used men called tub or cask baling, and a wet work it was and a wearisome; two balers were used, and one went down while the other came up. Now the chapmen bade Grettir have the job of sinking the balers, and said that now it should be tried what he could do; he said that the less it was tried the better it would be. But he goes down and sinks the balers, and now two were got to bale against him; they held out but a little while before they were overcome with weariness, and then four came forward and soon fared in likewise, and, so say some, that eight baled against him before the baling was done and the ship was made dry. Thenceforth the manner of the chapmen's words to Grettir was much changed, for they saw what strength he had to fall back upon; and from that time he was the stoutest and readiest to help, wheresoever need was.

Now they bore off east into the main, and much thick weather they had, and one night unawares they ran suddenly on a rock, so that the nether part of the ship went from under her; then the boat was run down, and women and all the loose goods were brought off: nearby was a little holm whither they brought their matters as they best could in the night; but when it began to dawn they had a talk as to where they were come; then they who had fared between lands before knew the land for Southmere in Norway; there was an island hardby called Haramsey; many folk dwelt there, and therein too was the manor of a lord.

CHAPTER XVIII. Of Grettir at Haramsey and his dealings with Karr the Old

Now the lord who dwelt in the island was called Thorfinn; he was the son of Karr the Old, who had dwelt there long; and Thorfinn was a great chief.

But when day was fully come men saw from the island that the chapmen were brought to great straits. This was made known to Thorfinn, and he quickly bestirred himself, and had a large bark of his launched, rowed by sixteen men, on this bark were nigh thirty men in all; they came up speedily and saved the chapmen's wares; but the ship settled down, and much goods were lost there. Thorfinn brought all men from the ship home to himself, and they abode there a week and dried their wares. Then the chapmen went south into the land, and are now out of the tale.

Grettir was left behind with Thorfinn, and little he stirred, and was at most times mighty short of speech. Thorfinn bade give him meals, but otherwise paid small heed to him; Grettir was loth to follow him, and would not go out with him in the day; this Thorfinn took ill, but had not the heart to have food withheld from him.

Now Thorfinn was fond of stately house-keeping, and was a man of great joyance, and would fain have other men merry too: but Grettir would walk about from house to house, and often went into other farms about the island.

There was a man called Audun who dwelt at Windham; thither Grettir went every day, and he made friends with Audun, and there he was wont to sit till far on in the day. Now one night very late, as Grettir made ready to go home, he saw a great fire burst out on a ness to the north of Audun's farm. Grettir asked what new thing this might be. Audun said that he need be in no haste to know that.

"It would be said," quoth Grettir, "if that were seen in our land, that the flame burned above hid treasure."

The farmer said, "That fire I deem to be ruled over by one into whose matters it avails little to pry."

"Yet fain would I know thereof," said Grettir.

"On that ness," said Audun, "stands a barrow, great and strong, wherein was laid Karr the Old, Thorfinn's father; at first father and son had but one farm in the island; but since Karr died he has so haunted this place that he has swept away all farmers who owned lands here, so that now Thorfinn holds the whole island; but whatsoever man Thorfinn holds his hand over, gets no scathe."

Grettir said that he had told his tale well: "And," says he, "I shall come here to-morrow, and then thou shalt have digging-tools ready."

"Now, I pray thee," says Audun, "to do nought herein, for I know that Thorfinn will cast his hatred on thee therefor."

Grettir said he would risk that.

So the night went by, and Grettir came early on the morrow and the digging-tools were ready; the farmer goes with him to the barrow, and Grettir brake it open, and was rough-handed enough thereat, and did not leave off till he came to the rafters, and by then the day was spent; then he tore away the rafters, and now Audun prayed him hard not to go into the barrow; Grettir bade him guard the rope, "but I shall espy what dwells within here."

Then Grettir entered into the barrow, and right dark it was, and a smell there was therein none of the sweetest. Now he groped about to see how things were below; first he found horse-bones, and then he stumbled against the arm of a high-chair, and in that chair found a man sitting; great treasures of gold and silver were heaped together there, and a small chest was set under the feet of him full of silver; all these riches Grettir carried together to the rope; but as he went out through the barrow he was griped at right strongly; thereon he let go the treasure and rushed against the barrow-dweller, and now they set on one another unsparingly enough.

Everything in their way was kicked out of place, the barrow-wight setting on with hideous eagerness; Grettir gave back before him for a long time, till at last it came to this, that he saw it would not do to hoard his strength any more; now neither spared the other, and they were brought to where the horse-bones were, and thereabout they wrestled long. And now one, now the other, fell on his knee; but the end of the strife was, that the barrow-dweller fell over on his back with huge din. Then ran Audun from the holding of the rope, and deemed Grettir dead. But Grettir drew the sword, 'Jokul's gift,' and drave it at the neck of the barrow-bider so that it took off his head, and Grettir laid it at the thigh of him. Then he went to the rope with the treasure, and lo, Audun was clean gone, so he had to get up the rope by his hands; he had tied a line to the treasure, and therewith he now haled it up.

Grettir had got very stiff with his dealings with Karr, and now he went back to Thorfinn's house with the treasures, whenas all folk had set them down to table. Thorfinn gave Grettir a sharp look when he came into the drinking-hall, and asked him what work he had on hand so needful to do that he might not keep times of meals with other men. Grettir answers, "Many little matters will hap on late eves," and therewith he cast down on the table all the treasure he had taken in the barrow; but one matter there was thereof, on which he must needs keep his eyes; this was a short-sword, so good a weapon, that a better, he said, he had never seen; and this he gave up the last of all. Thorfinn was blithe to see that sword, for it was an heirloom of his house, and had never yet gone out of his kin.

"Whence came these treasures to thine hand?" said Thorfinn.

Grettir sang—

Lessener of the flame of sea,
My strong hope was true to me,
When I deemed that treasure lay
In the barrow; from to-day
Folk shall know that I was right;
The begetters of the fight
Small joy now shall have therein,
Seeking dragon's-lair to win.

Thorfinn answered, "Blood will seldom seem blood to thine eyes; no man before thee has had will to break open the barrow; but, because I know that what wealth soever is hid in earth or borne into barrow is wrongly placed, I shall not hold thee blame-worthy for thy deed as thou hast brought it all to me; yea, or whence didst thou get the good sword?"

Grettir answered and sang—

Lessener of waves flashing flame,
To my lucky hand this came
In the barrow where that thing
Through the dark fell clattering;
If that helm-fire I should gain,
Made so fair to be the bane
Of the breakers of the bow,
Ne'er from my hand should it go.

Thorfinn said, "Well hast thou prayed for it, but thou must show some deed of fame before I give thee that sword, for never could I get it of my father while he lived."

Said Grettir, "Who knows to whom most gain will come of it in the end?"

So Thorfinn took the treasures and kept the sword at his bed-head, and the winter wore on toward Yule, so that little else fell out to be told of.

CHAPTER XIX. Of Yule at Haramsey, and how Grettir dealt with the Bearserks.

Now the summer before these things Earl Eric Hakonson made ready to go from his land west to England, to see King Knut the Mighty, his brother-in-law, but left behind him in the rule of Norway Hakon, his son, and gave him into the hands of Earl Svein, his brother, for the watching and warding of his realm, for Hakon was a child in years.

But before Earl Eric went away from the land, he called together lords and rich bonders, and many things they spoke on laws and the rule of the land, for Earl Eric was a man good at rule. Now men thought it an exceeding ill fashion in the land that runagates or bearserks called to holm high-born men for their fee or womankind, in such wise, that whosoever should fall before the other should lie unatoned; hereof many got both shame and loss of goods, and some lost their lives withal; and therefore Earl Eric did away with all holm-gangs and outlawed all bearserks who fared with raids and riots.

In the making of this law, the chief of all, with Earl Eric, was Thorfinn Karrson, from Haramsey, for he was a wise man, and a dear friend of the Earls.

Two brothers are named as being of the worst in these matters, one hight Thorir Paunch, the other Ogmund the Evil; they were of Halogaland kin, bigger and stronger than other men. They wrought the bearserks'-gang and spared nothing in their fury; they would take away the wives of men and hold them for a week or a half-month, and then bring them back to their husbands; they robbed wheresoever they came, or did some other ill deeds. Now Earl Eric made them outlaws through the length and breadth of Norway, and Thorfinn was the eagerest of men in bringing about their outlawry, therefore they deemed that they owed him ill-will enow.

So the Earl went away from the land, as is said in his Saga; but Earl Svein bore sway over Norway. Thorfinn went home to his house, and sat at home till just up to Yule, as is aforesaid; but at Yule he made ready to go to his farm called Slysfirth, which is on the mainland, and thither he had bidden many of his friends. Thorfinn's wife could not go with her husband, for her daughter of ripe years lay ill a-bed, so they both abode at home. Grettir was at home too, and eight house-carles. Now Thorfinn went with thirty freedmen to the Yule-feast, whereat there was the greatest mirth and joyance among men.

Now Yule-eve comes on, and the weather was bright and calm; Grettir was mostly abroad this day, and saw how ships fared north and south along the land, for each one sought the other's home where the Yule drinking was settled to come off. By this time the goodman's daughter was so much better that she could walk about with her mother, and thus the day wore on.

Now Grettir sees how a ship rows up toward the island; it was not right big, but shield-hung it was from stem to stern, and stained all above the sea: these folk rowed smartly, and made for the boat-stands of goodman Thorfinn, and when the keel took land, those who were therein sprang overboard. Grettir cast up the number of the men, and they were twelve altogether; he deemed their guise to be far from peaceful. They took up their ship and bore it up from the sea; thereafter they ran up to the boat-stand, and therein was that big boat of Thorfinn, which was never launched to sea by less than thirty men, but these twelve shot it in one haul down to the shingle of the foreshore; and thereon they took up their own bark and bore it into the boat-stand.

Now Grettir thought that he could see clear enough that they would make themselves at home. But he goes down to meet them, and welcomes them merrily, and asks who they were and what

their leader was high; he to whom these words were spoken answered quickly, and said that his name was Thorir, and that he was called Paunch, and that his brother was Ogmund, and that the others were fellows of theirs.

"I deem," said Thorir, "that thy master Thorfinn has heard tell of us; is he perchance at home?"

Grettir answered, "Lucky men are ye, and hither have come in a good hour, if ye are the men I take you to be; the goodman is gone away with all his home-folk who are freemen, and will not be home again till after Yule; but the mistress is at home, and so is the goodman's daughter; and if I thought that I had some ill-will to pay back, I should have chosen above all things to have come just thus; for here are all matters in plenty whereof ye stand in need both beer, and all other good things."

Thorir held his peace, while Grettir let this tale run on, then he said to Ogmund—

"How far have things come to pass other than as I guessed? and now am I well enough minded to take revenge on Thorfinn for having made us outlaws; and this man is ready enough of tidings, and no need have we to drag the words out of him."

"Words all may use freely," said Grettir, "and I shall give you such cheer as I may; and now come home with me."

They held him have thanks therefor, and said they would take his offer.

But when they came home to the farm, Grettir took Thorir by the hand and led him into the hall; and now was Grettir mightily full of words. The mistress was in the hall, and had had it decked with hangings, and made all fair and seemly; but when she heard Grettir's talk, she stood still on the floor, and asked whom he welcomed in that earnest wise.

He answered, "Now, mistress, is it right meet to welcome these guests merrily, for here is come goodman Thorir Paunch and the whole twelve of them, and are minded to sit here Yule over, and a right good hap it is, for we were few enough before."

She answered, "Am I to number these among bonders and good-men, who are the worst of robbers and ill-doers? a large share of my goods had I given that they had not come here as at this time; and ill dost thou reward Thorfinn, for that he took thee a needy man from shipwreck and has held thee through the winter as a free man."

Grettir said, "It would be better to take the wet clothes off these guests than to scold at me; since for that thou mayst have time long enough."

Then said Thorir, "Be not cross-grained, mistress; nought shall thou miss thy husband's being away, for a man shall be got in his place for thee, yea, and for thy daughter a man, and for each of the home-women."

"That is spoken like a man," said Grettir, "nor will they thus have any cause to bewail their lot."

Now all the women rushed forth from the hall smitten with huge dread and weeping; then said Grettir to the bearserks, "Give into my hands what it pleases you to lay aside of weapons and wet clothes, for the folk will not be yielding to us while they are scared."

Thorir said he heeded not how women might squeal; "But," said he, "thee indeed we may set apart from the other home-folk, and methinks we may well make thee our man of trust."

"See to that yourselves," said Grettir, "but certes I do not take to all men alike."

Thereupon they laid aside the more part of their weapons, and thereafter Grettir said—

"Methinks it is a good rede now that ye sit down to table and drink somewhat, for it is right likely that ye are thirsty after the rowing."

They said they were ready enough for that, but knew not where to find out the cellar; Grettir asked if they would that he should see for things and go about for them. The bearserks said they would be right fain of that; so Grettir fetched beer and gave them to drink; they were mightily weary, and drank in huge draughts, and still he let them have the strongest beer that there was, and this went on for a long time, and meanwhile he told them many merry tales. From all this there was din enough to be heard among them, and the home-folk were nowise fain to come to them.

Now Thorir said, "Never yet did I meet a man unknown to me, who would do us such good deeds as this man; now, what reward wilt thou take of us for thy work?"

Grettir answered, "As yet I look to no reward for this; but if we be even such friends when ye go away, as it looks like we shall be, I am minded to join fellowship with you; and though I be of less might than some of you, yet shall I not let any man of big redes."

Hereat they were well pleased, and would settle the fellowship with vows.

Grettir said that this they should not do, "For true is the old saw, *Ale is another man*, nor shall ye settle this in haste any further than as I have said, for on both sides are we men little meet to rule our tempers."

They said that they would not undo what they had said.

Withal the evening wore on till it grew quite dark; then sees Grettir that they were getting very heavy with drink, so he said—

"Do ye not find it time to go to sleep?"

Thorir said, "Time enough forsooth, and sure shall I be to keep to what I have promised the mistress."

Then Grettir went forth from the hall, and cried out loudly—

"Go ye to your beds, women all, for so is goodman Thorir pleased to bid."

They cursed him for this, and to hear them was like hearkening to the noise of many wolves. Now the bearserks came forth from the hall, and Grettir said—

"Let us go out, and I will show you Thorfinn's cloth bower."

They were willing to be led there; so they came to an out-bower exceeding great; a door there was to it, and a strong lock thereon, and the storehouse was very strong withal; there too was a closet good and great, and a shield panelling between the chambers; both chambers stood high, and men went up by steps to them. Now the bearserks got riotous and pushed Grettir about, and he kept tumbling away from them, and when they least thought thereof, he slipped quickly out of the bower, seized the latch, slammed the door to, and put the bolt on. Thorir and his fellows thought at first that the door must have got locked of itself, and paid no heed thereto; they had light with them, for Grettir had showed them many choice things which Thorfinn owned, and these they now noted awhile. Meantime Grettir made all speed home to the farm, and when he came in at the door he called out loudly, and asked where the goodwife was; she held her peace, for she did not dare to answer.

He said, "Here is somewhat of a chance of a good catch; but are there any weapons of avail here?"

She answers, "Weapons there are, but how they may avail thee I know not."

"Let us talk thereof anon," says he, "but now let every man do his best, for later on no better chance shall there be."

The good wife said, "Now God were in garth if our lot might better: over Thorfinn's bed hangs the barbed spear, the big one that was owned by Karr the Old; there, too, is a helmet and a byrni, and the short-sword, the good one; and the arms will not fail if thine heart does well."

Grettir seizes the helmet and spear, girds himself with the short-sword, and rushed out swiftly; and the mistress called upon the house-carles, bidding them follow such a dauntless man, four of them rushed forth and seized their weapons, but the other four durst come nowhere nigh. Now it is to be said of the bearserks that they thought Grettir delayed his coming back strangely; and now they began to doubt if there were not some guile in the matter. They rushed against the door and found it was locked, and now they try the timber walls so that every beam creaked again; at last they brought things so far that they broke down the shield-panelling, got into the passage, and thence out to the steps. Now bearserks'-gang seized them, and they howled like dogs. In that very nick of time Grettir came up and with both hands thrust his spear at the midst of Thorir, as he was about to get down the steps, so that it went through him at once. Now the spear-head was both long and broad, and Ogmund the Evil ran on to Thorir and pushed him on to Grettir's thrust, so that all went up to the barb-ends; then the spear stood out through Thorir's back and into Ogmund's breast, and they both tumbled dead off the spear; then of the others each rushed down the steps as he came forth; Grettir set on

each one of them, and in turn hewed with the sword, or thrust with the spear; but they defended themselves with logs that lay on the green, and whatso thing they could lay hands on, therefore the greatest danger it was to deal with them, because of their strength, even though they were weaponless.

Two of the Halogalanders Grettir slew on the green, and then came up the house-carles; they could not come to one mind as to what weapons each should have; now they set on whenever the bearserks gave back, but when they turned about on them, then the house-carles slunk away up to the houses. Six vikings fell there, and of all of them was Grettir the bane. Then the six others got off and came down to the boat-stand, and so into it, and thence they defended themselves with oars. Grettir now got great blows from them, so that at all times he ran the risk of much hurt; but the house-carles went home, and had much to say of their stout onset; the mistress bade them espy what became of Grettir, but that was not to be got out of them. Two more of the bearserks Grettir slew in the boat-stand, but four slipped out by him; and by this, dark night had come on; two of them ran into a corn-barn, at the farm of Windham, which is afornamed: here they fought for a long time, but at last Grettir killed them both; then was he beyond measure weary and stiff, the night was far gone, and the weather got very cold with the drift of the snow. He was fain to leave the search of the two vikings who were left now, so he walked home to the farm. The mistress had lights lighted in the highest lofts at the windows that they might guide him on his way; and so it was that he found his road home whereas he saw the light.

But when he was come into the door, the mistress went up to him, and bade him welcome.

"Now," she said, "thou hast reaped great glory, and freed me and my house from a shame of which we should never have been healed, but if thou hadst saved us."

Grettir answered, "Methinks I am much the same as I was this evening, when thou didst cast ill words on me."

The mistress answered, "We wotted not that thou wert a man of such prowess as we have now proved thee; now shall all things in the house be at thy will which I may bestow on thee, and which it may be seeming for thee to take; but methinks that Thorfinn will reward thee better still when he comes home."

Grettir answered, "Little of reward will be needed now, but I keep thine offer till the coming of the master; and I have some hope now that ye will sleep in peace as for the bearserks."

Grettir drank little that evening, and lay with his weapons about him through the night. In the morning, when it began to dawn, people were summoned together throughout the island, and a search was set on foot for the bearserks who had escaped the night before; they were found far on in the day under a rock, and were by then dead from cold and wounds; then they were brought unto a tidewashed heap of stones and buried thereunder.

After that folk went home, and the men of that island deemed themselves brought unto fair peace.

Now when Grettir came back to the mistress, he sang this stave—

By the sea's wash have we made
Graves, where twelve spear-groves are laid;
I alone such speedy end,
Unto all these folk did send.
O fair giver forth of gold,
Whereof can great words be told,
'Midst the deeds one man has wrought,
If this deed should come to nought?

The good wife said, "Surely thou art like unto very few men who are now living on the earth."

So she set him in the high seat, and all things she did well to him, and now time wore on till Thorfinn's coming home was looked for.

CHAPTER XX. How Thorfinn met Grettir at Haramsey again

After Yule Thorfinn made ready for coming home, and he let those folk go with good gifts whom he had bidden to his feast. Now he fares with his following till he comes hard by his boat-stands; they saw a ship lying on the strand, and soon knew it for Thorfinn's

bark, the big one. Now Thorfinn had as yet had no news of the vikings, he bade his men hasten landward, "For I fear," said he, "that friends have not been at work here."

Thorfinn was the first to step ashore before his men, and forthwith he went up to the boat-stand; he saw a keel standing there, and knew it for the bearserks' ship. Then he said to his men, "My mind misgives me much that here things have come to pass, even such as I would have given the whole island, yea, every whit of what I have herein, that they might never have happened."

They asked why he spake thus. Then he said, "Here have come the vikings, whom I know to be the worst of all Norway, Thorir Paunch and Ogmund the Evil; in good sooth they will hardly have kept house happily for us, and in an Icelander I have but little trust."

Withal he spoke many things hereabout to his fellows.

Now Grettir was at home, and so brought it about, that folk were slow to go down to the shore; and said he did not care much if the Goodman Thorfinn had somewhat of a shake at what he saw before him; but when the mistress asked him leave to go, he said she should have her will as to where she went, but that he himself should stir nowhither. She ran swiftly to meet Thorfinn, and welcomed him cheerily. He was glad thereof, and said, "Praise be to God that I see thee whole and merry, and my daughter in likewise. But how have ye fared since I went from home?"

She answered, "Things have turned out well, but we were near being overtaken by such a shame as we should never have had healing of, if thy winter-guest had not holpen us."

Then Thorfinn spake, "Now shall we sit down, but do thou tell us these tidings."

Then she told all things plainly even as they had come to pass, and praised greatly Grettir's stoutness and great daring; meanwhile Thorfinn held his peace, but when she had made an end of her tale, he said, "How true is the saw, *Long it takes to try a man*. But where is Grettir now?"

The goodwife said, "He is at home in the hall."

Thereupon they went home to the farm.

Thorfinn went up to Grettir and kissed him, and thanked him with many fair words for the great heart which he had shown to him; "And I will say to thee what few say to their friends, that I would thou shouldst be in need of men, that then thou mightest know if I were to thee in a man's stead or not; but for thy good deed I can never reward thee unless thou comest to be in some troublous need; but as to thy abiding with me, that shall ever stand open to thee when thou wilt it; and thou shalt be held the first of all my men."

Grettir bade him have much thank therefor. "And," quoth he, "this should I have taken even if thou hadst made me proffer thereof before."

Now Grettir sat there the winter over, and was in the closest friendship with Thorfinn; and for this deed he was now well renowned all over Norway, and there the most, where the bearserks had erst wrought the greatest ill deeds.

This spring Thorfinn asked Grettir what he was about to busy himself with: he said he would go north to Vogar while the fair was. Thorfinn said there was ready for him money as much as he would. Grettir said that he needed no more money at that time than faring-silver: this, Thorfinn said, was full-well due to him, and thereupon went with him to ship.

Now he gave him the short-sword, the good one, which Grettir bore as long as he lived, and the choicest of choice things it was. Withal Thorfinn bade Grettir come to him whenever he might need aid.

But Grettir went north to Vogar, and a many folk were there; many men welcomed him there right heartily who had not seen him before, for the sake of that great deed of prowess which he had done when he saw the vikings; many high-born men prayed him to come and abide with them, but he would fain go back to his friend Thorfinn. Now he took ship in a bark that was owned of a man hight Thorkel, who dwelt in Salfit in Halogaland, and was a high-born man. But when Grettir came to Thorkel he welcomed him right heartily, and bade Grettir abide with him that winter, and laid many words thereto.

This offer Grettir took, and was with Thorkel that winter in great joyance and fame.

CHAPTER XXI. Of Grettir and Biorn and the Bear

There was a man, hight Biorn, who was dwelling with Thorkel; he was a man of rash temper, of good birth, and somewhat akin to Thorkel; he was not well loved of men, for he would slander much those who were with Thorkel, and in this wise he sent many away. Grettir and he had little to do together; Biorn thought him of little worth weighed against himself, but Grettir was unyielding, so that things fell athwart between them. Biorn was a mightily boisterous man, and made himself very big; many young men gat into fellowship with him in these things, and would stray abroad by night. Now it befell, that early in winter a savage bear ran abroad from his winter lair, and got so grim that he spared neither man nor beast. Men thought he had been roused by the noise that Biorn and his fellows had made. The brute got so hard to deal with that he tore down the herds of men, and Thorkel had the greatest hurt thereof, for he was the richest man in the neighbourhood.

Now one day Thorkel bade his men to follow him, and search for the lair of the bear. They found it in sheer sea-rocks; there was a high rock and a cave before it down below, but only one track to go up to it: under the cave were scarped rocks, and a heap of stones down by the sea, and sure death it was to all who might fall down there. The bear lay in his lair by day, but went abroad as soon as night fell; no fold could keep sheep safe from him, nor could any dogs be set on him: and all this men thought the heaviest trouble. Biorn, Thorkel's kinsman, said that the greatest part had been done, as the lair had been found. "And now I shall try," said he, "what sort of play we namesakes shall have together." Grettir made as if he knew not what Biorn said on this matter.

Now it happened always when men went to sleep anights that Biorn disappeared: and one night when Biorn went to the lair, he was aware that the beast was there before him, and roaring savagely. Biorn lay down in the track, and had over him his shield, and was going to wait till the beast should stir abroad as his manner was. Now the bear had an inkling of the man, and got somewhat slow to move off. Biorn waxed very sleepy where he lay, and cannot wake up, and just at this time the beast betakes himself from his lair; now he sees where the man lies, and, hooking at him with his claw, he tears from him the shield and throws it down over the rocks. Biorn started up suddenly awake, takes to his legs and runs home, and it was a near thing that the beast gat him not. This his fellows knew, for they had spies about Biorn's ways; in the morning they found the shield, and made the greatest jeering at all this.

At Yule Thorkel went himself, and eight of them altogether, and there was Grettir and Biorn and other followers of Thorkel. Grettir had on a fur-cloak, which he laid aside while they set on the beast. It was awkward for an onslaught there, for thereat could folk come but by spear-thrusts, and all the spear-points the bear turned off him with his teeth. Now Biorn urged them on much to the onset, yet he himself went not so nigh as to run the risk of any hurt. Amid this, when men looked least for it, Biorn suddenly seized Grettir's coat, and cast it into the beast's lair. Now nought they could wreak on him, and had to go back when the day was far spent. But when Grettir was going, he misses his coat, and he could see that the bear has it cast under him. Then he said, "What man of you has wrought the jest of throwing my cloak into the lair?"

Biorn says, "He who is like to dare to own to it."

Grettir answers, "I set no great store on such matters."

Now they went on their way home, and when they had walked awhile, the thong of Grettir's leggings brake. Thorkel bid them wait for him; but Grettir said there was no need of that. Then said Biorn, "Ye need not think that Grettir will run away from his coat; he will have the honour all to himself, and will slay that beast all alone, wherefrom we have gone back all eight of us; thus would he be such as he is said to be: but sluggishly enow has he fared forth to-day."

"I know not," said Thorkel, "how thou wilt fare in the end, but men of equal prowess I deem you not: lay as few burdens on him as thou mayst, Biorn."

Biorn said, that neither of them should pick and choose words from out his mouth.

Now, when a hill's brow was between them, Grettir went back to the pass, for now there was no striving with others for the onset. He drew the sword, Jokul's gift, but had a loop over the handle of the short-sword, and slipped it up over his hand, and this he did in that he thought he could easier have it at his will if his hand were loose. He went up into the pass forthwith, and when the beast saw a man, it rushed against Grettir exceeding fiercely, and smote at him with that paw which was furthest off from the rock; Grettir hewed against the blow with the sword, and therewith smote the paw above the claws, and took it off; then the beast was fain to smite at Grettir with the paw that was whole, and dropped down therewith on to the docked one, but it was shorter than he wotted of, and withal he tumbled into Grettir's arms. Now he griped at the beast between the ears and held him off, so that he got not at him to bite. And, so Grettir himself says, that herein he deemed he had had the hardest trial of his strength, thus to hold the brute. But now as it struggled fiercely, and the space was narrow, they both tumbled down over the rock; the beast was the heaviest of the two, and came down first upon the stone heap below, Grettir being the uppermost, and the beast was much mangled on its nether side. Now Grettir seized the short-sword and thrust it into the heart of the bear, and that was his bane. Thereafter he went home, taking with him his cloak all tattered, and withal what he had cut from the paw of the bear. Thorkel sat a-drinking when he came into the hall, and much men laughed at the rags of the cloak Grettir had cast over him. Now he threw on to the table what he had chopped off the paw.

Then said Thorkel, "Where is now Biorn my kinsman? never did I see thy irons bite the like of this, Biorn, and my will it is, that thou make Grettir a seemly offer for this shame thou hast wrought on him."

Biorn said that was like to be long about, "and never shall I care whether he likes it well or ill."

Then Grettir sang—

Of that war-god came to hall
Frighted, when no blood did fall,
In the dusk; who ever cried
On the bear last autumn-tide;
No man saw me sitting there
Late at eve before the lair;
Yet the shaggy one to-day
From his den I drew away.

"Sure enough," said Biorn, "thou hast fared forth well to-day, and two tales thou tellest of us twain therefor; and well I know that thou hast had a good hit at me."

Thorkel said, "I would, Grettir, that thou wouldst not avenge thee on Biorn, but for him I will give a full man-gild if thereby ye may be friends."

Biorn said he might well turn his money to better account, than to boot for this; "And, methinks it is wisest that in my dealings with Grettir *one oak should have what from the other it shaves*."

Grettir said that he should like that very well. But Thorkel said, "Yet I hope, Grettir, that thou wilt do this for my sake, not to do aught against Biorn while ye are with me."

"That shall be," said Grettir.

Biorn said he would walk fearless of Grettir wheresoever they might meet.

Grettir smiled mockingly, but would not take boot for Biorn. So they were here that winter through.

CHAPTER XXII. Of the Slaying of Biorn

In the spring Grettir went north to Vogar with chapmen. He and Thorkel parted in friendship; but Biorn went west to England, and was the master of Thorkel's ship that went thither. Biorn dwelt thereabout that summer and bought such things for Thorkel as he had given him word to get; but as the autumn wore on he sailed from the west. Grettir was at Vogar till the fleet broke up; then he

sailed from the north with some chapmen until they came to a harbour at an island before the mouth of Drontheimfirth, called Gattar, where they pitched their tents. Now when they were housed, a ship came sailing havenward from the south along the land; they soon saw that it was an England farer; she took the strand further out, and her crew went ashore; Grettir and his fellows went to meet them. But when they met, Grettir saw that Biorn was among those men, and spake—

"It is well that we have met here; now we may well take up our ancient quarrel, and now I will try which of us twain may do the most."

Biorn said that was an old tale to him, "but if there has been aught of such things between us, I will boot for it, so that thou mayst think thyself well holden thereof."

Then Grettir sang—

In hard strife I slew the bear,
Thereof many a man doth rear;
Then the cloak I oft had worn,
By the beast to rags was torn;
Thou, O braggart ring-bearer,
Wrought that jest upon me there,
Now thou payest for thy jest,
Not in words am I the best?

Biorn said, that oft had greater matters than these been atoned for.

Grettir said, "That few had chosen hitherto to strive to trip him up with spite and envy, nor ever had he taken fee for such, and still must matters fare in likewise. Know thou that we shall not both of us go hence whole men if I may have my will, and a coward's name will I lay on thy back, if thou darest not to fight."

Now Biorn saw that it would avail nought to try to talk himself free; so he took his weapons and went aland.

Then they ran one at the other and fought, but not long before Biorn got sore wounded, and presently fell dead to earth. But when Biorn's fellows saw that, they went to their ship, and made off north along the land to meet Thorkel and told him of this hap: he said it had not come to pass ere it might have been looked for.

Soon after this Thorkel went south to Drontheim, and met there Earl Svein. Grettir went south to Mere after the slaying of Biorn, and found his friend Thorfinn, and told him what had befallen. Thorfinn gave him good welcome, and said—

"It is well now that thou art in need of a friend; with me shalt thou abide until these matters have come to an end."

Grettir thanked him for his offer, and said he would take it now.

Earl Svein was dwelling in Drontheim, at Steinker, when he heard of Biorn's slaying; at that time there was with him Hiarandi, the brother of Biorn, and he was the Earl's man; he was exceeding wroth when he heard of the slaying of Biorn, and begged the Earl's aid in the matter, and the Earl gave his word thereto.

Then he sent men to Thorfinn and summoned to him both him and Grettir. Thorfinn and Grettir made ready at once at the Earl's bidding to go north to Drontheim to meet him. Now the Earl held a council on the matter, and bade Hiarandi to be thereat; Hiarandi said he would not bring his brother to purse; "and I shall either fare in a like wise with him, or else wreak vengeance for him." Now when the matter was looked into, the Earl found that Biorn had been guilty towards Grettir in many ways; and Thorfinn offered weregild, such as the Earl deemed might be befitting for Biorn's kin to take; and thereon he had much to say on the freedom which Grettir had wrought for men north there in the land, when he slew the bearserks, as has been aforesaid.

The Earl answered, "With much truth thou sayest this, Thorfinn, that was the greatest land-ridding, and good it seems to us to take weregild because of thy words; and withal Grettir is a man well renowned because of his strength and prowess."

Hiarandi would not take the settlement, and they broke up the meeting. Thorfinn got his kinsman Arnbiorn to go about with Grettir day by day, for he knew that Hiarandi lay in wait for his life.

CHAPTER XXIII. The Slaying of Hiarandi

It happened one day that Grettir and Arnbiorn were walking through some streets for their sport, that as they came past a certain court gate, a man bounded forth therefrom with axe borne

aloft, and drave it at Grettir with both hands; he was all unawares of this, and walked on slowly; Arnbiorn caught timely sight of the man, and seized Grettir, and thrust him on so hard that he fell on his knee; the axe smote the shoulder-blade, and cut sideways out under the arm-pit, and a great wound it was. Grettir turned about nimbly, and drew the short-sword, and saw that there was Hiarandi. Now the axe stuck fast in the road, and it was slow work for Hiarandi to draw it to him again, and in this very nick of time Grettir hewed at him, and the blow fell on the upper arm, near the shoulder, and cut it off; then the fellows of Hiarandi rushed forth, five of them, and a fight forthwith befell, and speedy change happened there, for Grettir and Arnbiorn slew those who were with Hiarandi, all but one, who got off, and forthwith went to the Earl to tell him these tidings.

The Earl was exceeding wroth when he heard of this, and the second day thereafter he had a Thing summoned. Then they, Thorfinn and Grettir, came both to the Thing. The Earl put forth against Grettir the guilt for these manslaughters; he owned them all, and said he had had to defend his hands.

"Whereof methinks I bear some marks on me," says Grettir, "and surely I had found death if Arnbiorn had not saved me."

The Earl answered that it was ill hap that Grettir was not slain.

"For many a man's bane wilt thou be if thou livest, Grettir."

Then came to the Earl, Bessi, son of Skald-Torfa, a fellow and a friend to Grettir; he and Thorfinn went before the Earl and prayed him respite for Grettir, and offered, that the Earl alone should doom in this matter, but that Grettir might have peace and leave to dwell in the land.

The Earl was slow to come to any settlement, but suffered himself to be led thereto because of their prayers. There respite was granted to Grettir till the next spring; still the Earl would not settle the peace till Gunnar, the brother of Biorn and Hiarandi, was thereat; now Gunnar was a court-owner in Tunsberg.

In the spring, the Earl summoned Grettir and Thorfinn east to Tunsberg, for he would dwell there east while the most sail was thereat. Now they went east thither, and the Earl was before them in the town when they came. Here Grettir found his brother, Thorstein Dromond, who was fain of him and bade him abide with him: Thorstein was a court-owner in the town. Grettir told him all about his matters, and Thorstein gave a good hearing thereto, but bade him beware of Gunnar. And so the spring wore on.

CHAPTER XXIV. Of the Slaying of Gunnar, and Grettir's strife with Earl Svein

Now Gunnar was in the town, and lay in wait for Grettir always and everywhere. It happened on a day that Grettir sat in a booth a-drinking, for he would not throw himself in Gunnar's way. But, when he wotted of it the least, the door was driven at so that it brake asunder, four men all-armed burst in, and there was Gunnar and his fellows.

They set on Grettir; but he caught up his weapons which hung over him, and then drew aback into the corner, whence he defended himself, having before him the shield, but dealing blows with the short-sword, nor did they have speedy luck with him. Now he smote at one of Gunnar's fellows, and more he needed not; then he advanced forth on the floor, and therewith they were driven doorward through the booth, and there fell another man of Gunnar's; then were Gunnar and his fellows fain of flight; one of them got to the door, struck his foot against the threshold and lay there grovelling and was slow in getting to his feet. Gunnar had his shield before him, and gave back before Grettir, but he set on him fiercely and leaped up on the cross-beam by the door. Now the hands of Gunnar and the shield were within the door, but Grettir dealt a blow down amidst Gunnar and the shield and cut off both his hands by the wrist, and he fell aback out of the door; then Grettir dealt him his death-blow.

But in this nick of time got to his feet Gunnar's man, who had lain fallen awhile, and he ran straightway to see the Earl, and to tell him these tidings.

Earl Svein was wondrous wroth at this tale, and forthwith summoned a Thing in the town. But when Thorfinn and Thorstein Dromond knew this, they brought together their kin and friends

and came thronging to the Thing. Very cross-grained was the Earl, and it was no easy matter to come to speech with him. Thorfinn went up first before the Earl and said, "For this cause am I come hither, to offer thee peace and honour for these man-slayings that Grettir has wrought; thou alone shall shape and settle all, if the man hath respite of his life."

The Earl answered sore wroth: "Late wilt thou be loth to ask respite for Grettir; but in my mind it is that thou hast no good cause in court; he has now slain three brothers, one at the heels of the other, who were men so brave that they would none bear the other to pursue. Now it will not avail thee, Thorfinn, to pray for Grettir, for I will not thus bring wrongs into the land so as to take boot for such unmeasured misdeeds."

Then came forward Bessi, Skald-Torfa's son, and prayed the Earl to take the offered settlement. "Thereto," he said, "I will give up my goods, for Grettir is a man of great kin and a good friend of mine; thou mayst well see, Lord, that it is better to respite one man's life and to have therefor the thanks of many, thyself alone dooming the fines, than to break down thine own honour, and risk whether thou canst seize the man or not."

The Earl answered, "Thou farest well herein, Bessi, and showest at all times that thou art a high-minded man; still I am loth thus to break the laws of the land, giving respite to men of foredoomed lives."

Then stepped forth Thorstein Dromond and greeted the Earl, and made offers on Grettir's behalf, and laid thereto many fair words. The Earl asked for what cause he made offers for this man. Thorstein said that they were brothers. The Earl said that he had not known it before: "Now it is but the part of a man for thee to help him, but because we have made up our mind not to take money for these man-slayings, we shall make all men of equal worth here, and Grettir's life will we have, whatsoever it shall cost and whensoever chance shall serve."

Thereat the Earl sprang up, and would listen in nowise to the offered atonements.

Now Thorfinn and his folk went home to Thorstein's court and made ready. But when the Earl saw this he bade all his men take weapons, and then he went thither with his folk in array. But before he came up Thorfinn and his men ordered themselves for defence before the gate of the court. Foremost stood Thorfinn and Thorstein and Grettir, and then Bessi, and each of them had a large following of men with him.

The Earl bade them to give up Grettir, nor to bring themselves into an evil strait; they made the very same offer as before. The Earl would not hearken thereto. Then Thorfinn and Thorstein said that the Earl should have more ado yet for the getting of Grettir's life, "For one fate shall befall us all, and it will be said thou workest hard for one man's life, if all we have to be laid on earth therefor."

The Earl said he should spare none of them, and now they were at the very point to fight.

Then went to the Earl many men of goodwill, and prayed him not to push matters on to such great evils, and said they would have to pay heavily before all these were slain. The Earl found this rede to be wholesome, and became somewhat softened thereat.

Thereafter they drew up an agreement to which Thorstein and Thorfinn were willing enough, now that Grettir should have respite of his life. The Earl spake: "Know ye," quoth he, "that though I deal by way of mean words with these man-slayings at this time, yet I call this no settlement, but I am loth to fight against my own folk; though I see that ye make little of me in this matter."

Then said Thorfinn, "This is a greater honour for thee, Lord, for that thou alone wilt doom the wergild."

Then the Earl said that Grettir should go in peace, as for him, out to Iceland, when ships fared out, if so they would; they said that they would take this. They paid the Earl fines to his mind, and parted from him with little friendship. Grettir went with Thorfinn; he and his brother Thorstein parted fondly.

Thorfinn got great fame for the aid he had given Grettir against such overwhelming power as he had to deal with: none of the men who had helped Grettir were ever after well loved of the Earl, save Bessi.

So quoth Grettir—

To our helping came
The great of name;
Thorfinn was there
Born rule to bear;
When all bolts fell
Into locks, and hell
Cried out for my life
In the Tunsberg strife.
The Dromond fair
Of red seas was there,
The stone of the bane
Of steel-gods vain:
From Bylest's kin
My life to win,
Above all men
He laboured then.
Then the king's folk
Would strike no stroke
To win my head;
So great grew dread;
For the leopard came
With byrni's flame,
And on thoughts-burg wall
Should that bright fire fall.

Grettir went back north with Thorfinn, and was with him till he gat him to ship with chapmen who were bound out to Iceland: he gave him many fair gifts of raiment, and a fair-stained saddle and a bridle withal. They parted in friendship, and Thorfinn bade him come to him whensoever he should come back to Norway.

CHAPTER XXV. The Slaying of Thorgils Makson

Asmund the Greyhaired lived on at Biarg, while Grettir was abroad, and by that time he was thought to be the greatest of bonders in Midfirth. Thorkel Krafla died during those seasons that Grettir was out of Iceland. Thorvald Asgeirson farmed then at the Ridge in Waterdale, and waxed a great chief. He was the father of Dalla whom Isleif had to wife, he who afterwards was bishop at Skalholt.

Asmund had in Thorvald the greatest help in suits and in many other matters. At Asmund's grew up a man, hight Thorgils, called Thorgils Makson, near akin to Asmund. Thorgils was a man of great strength and gained much money by Asmund's foresight.

Asmund bought for Thorgils the land at Brookmeet, and there he farmed. Thorgils was a great store-gatherer, and went a-searching to the Strands every year, and there he gat for himself whales and other gettings; and a stout-hearted man he was.

In those days was at its height the waxing of the foster-brothers, Thorgeir Havaron and Thormod Coalbrowskald; they had a boat and went therein far and wide, and were not thought men of much even-dealing. It chanced one summer that Thorgils Makson found a whale on the common drift-lands, and forthwith he and his folk set about cutting it up.

But when the foster-brothers heard thereof they went thither, and at first their talk had a likely look out. Thorgils offered that they should have the half of the uncut whale; but they would have for themselves all the uncut, or else divide all into halves, both the cut and the uncut. Thorgils flatly refused to give up what was cut of the whale; and thereat things grew hot between them, and forthwithal both sides caught up their weapons and fought. Thorgeir and Thorgils fought long together without either losing or gaining, and both were of the eagerest. Their strife was both fierce and long, but the end of it was, that Thorgils fell dead to earth before Thorgeir; but Thormod and the men of Thorgils fought in another place; Thormod had the best of that strife, and three of Thorgils' men fell before him. After the slaying of Thorgils, his folk went back east to Midfirth, and brought his dead body with them. Men thought that they had the greatest loss in him. But the foster-brothers took all the whale to themselves.

This meeting Thormod tells of in that drapa that he made on Thorgeir dead. Asmund the Greyhaired heard of the slaying of Thorgils his kinsman; he was suitor in the case for Thorgils' slaying, he went and took witnesses to the wounds, and summoned the case before the Althing, for then this seemed to be law, as the case had happened in another quarter. And so time wears on.

CHAPTER XXVI. Of Thorstein Kuggson, and the gathering for the Bloodsuit for the Slaying of Thorgils Makson

There was a man called Thorstein, he was the son of Thorkel Kugg, the son of Thord the Yeller, the son of Olaf Feilan, the son of Thorstein the Red, the son of Aud the Deeply-wealthy. The mother of Thorstein Kuggson was Thurid the daughter of Asgeir Madpate, Asgeir was father's brother of Asmund the Greyhaired.

Thorstein Kuggson was suitor in the case about Thorgils Makson's slaying along with Asmund the Greyhaired, who now sent word to Thorstein that he should come to meet him. Thorstein was a great champion, and the wildest-tempered of men; he went at once to meet his kinsman Asmund, and they talked the blood-suit over together. Thorstein was mightily wroth and said that no atonement should be for this, and said they had strength of kin enough to bring about for the slaying either outlawry or vengeance on men. Asmund said that he would follow him in whatsoever he would have done. They rode north to Thorvald their kinsman to pray his aid, and he quickly gave his word and said yea thereto. So they settled the suit against Thorgeir and Thormod; then Thorstein rode home to his farmstead, he then farmed at Liarskogar in Hvamsveit. Skeggi farmed at Hvam, he also joined in the suit with Thorstein. Skeggi was the son of Thorarinn Fylsenni, the son of Thord the Yeller; the mother of Skeggi was Fridgerd, daughter of Thord of Head.

These had a many men with them at the Thing, and pushed their suit with great eagerness.

Asmund and Thorvald rode from the north with six tens of men, and sat at Liarskogar many nights.

CHAPTER XXVII. The Suit for the Slaying of Thorgils Makson

A man hight Thorgils abode at Reek-knolls in those days, he was the son of Ari, the son of Mar, the son of Atli the Red, the son of Ulf the Squinter, who settled at Reekness; the mother of Thorgils Arisen was Thorgerd, the daughter of Alf a-Dales; another daughter of Alf was Thorelf, mother of Thorgeir Havarson. There had Thorgeir good kinship to trust in, for Thorgils was the greatest chief in the Westfirthers' quarter. He was a man of such bountifulness, that he gave food to any free-born man as long as he would have it, and therefore there was at all times a throng of people at Reek-knolls; thus had Thorgils much renown of his house-keeping. He was a man withal of good will and foreknowledge. Thorgeir was with Thorgils in winter, but went to the Strands in summer.

After the slaying of Thorgils Makson, Thorgeir went to Reek-knolls and told Thorgils Arisen these tidings; Thorgils said that he was ready to give him harbour with him, "But, methinks," he says, "that they will be heavy in the suit, and I am loth to eke out the troubles. Now I shall send a man to Thorstein and bid weregild for the slaying of Thorgils; but if he will not take atonement I shall not defend the case stiffly."

Thorgeir said he would trust to his foresight. In autumn Thorgils sent a man to Thorstein Kuggson to try settling the case, but he was cross-grained to deal with as to the taking money for the blood-suit of Thorgils Makson; but about the other man-slayings, he said he would do as wise men should urge him. Now when Thorgils heard this, he called Thorgeir to him for a talk, and asked him what kind of aid he now deemed meetest for him; Thorgeir said that it was most to his mind to go abroad if he should be outlawed. Thorgils said that should be tried. A ship lay up Northriver in Burgfirth; in that keel Thorgils secretly paid faring for the foster-brothers, and thus the winter passed. Thorgils heard that Asmund and Thorstein drew together many men to the Althing, and sat in Liarskogar. He drew out the time of riding from home, for he would that Asmund and Thorstein should have ridden by before him to the south, when he came from the west; and so it fell out. Thorgils rode south, and with him rode the foster-brothers. In this ride Thorgeir killed Bundle-Torfi of Marswell, and Skuf withal, and Biarni in Dog-dale; thus says Thormod in Thorgeir's-Drapa—

Mighty strife the warrior made,
When to earth was Makson laid,
Well the sword-shower wrought he there,
Flesh the ravens got to tear;
Then when Skuf and Biarni fell,
He was there the tale to tell;
Sea-steed's rider took his way
Through the thickest of the fray.

Thorgils settled the peace for the slaying of Skuf and Biarni then and there in the Dale, and delayed no longer than his will was before; Thorgeir went to ship, but Thorgils to the Althing, and came not thither until men were going to the courts.

Then Asmund the Greyhaired challenged the defence for the blood-suit on the slaying of Thorgils Makson. Thorgils went to the court and offered weregild for the slaying, if thereby Thorgeir might become free of guilt; he put forth for defence in the suit whether they had not free catch on all common foreshores. The lawman was asked if this was a lawful defence. Skapti was the lawman, and backed Asmund for the sake of their kinship. He said this was law if they were equal men, but said that bonders had a right to take before batchelors. Asmund said that Thorgils had offered an even sharing to the foster-brothers in so much of the whale as was uncut when they came thereto; and therewith that way of defence was closed against them. Now Thorstein and his kin followed up the suit with much eagerness, and nought was good to them but that Thorgeir should be made guilty.

Thorgils saw that one of two things was to be done, either to set on with many men, not knowing what might be gained thereby, or to suffer them to go on as they would; and, whereas Thorgeir had been got on board ship, Thorgils let the suit go on unheeded.

Thorgeir was outlawed, but for Thormod was taken weregild, and he to be quit. By this blood-suit Thorstein and Asmund were deemed to have waxed much. And now men ride home from the Thing.

Some men would hold talk that Thorgils had lightly backed the case, but he heeded their talk little, and let any one say thereon what he would.

But when Thorgeir heard of this outlawry, he said—

"Fain am I that those who have made me an outlaw should have full pay for this, ere all be over."

There was a man called Gaut Sleitason, who was akin to Thorgils Makson. Gaut had made ready to go in this same ship wherein Thorgeir was to sail. He bristled up against Thorgeir, and showed mighty ill-will against him and went about scowling; when the chapmen found this out, they thought it far from safe that both should sail in one ship. Thorgeir said he heeded not how much soever Gaut would bend his brows on him; still it was agreed that Gaut should take himself off from the ship, whereupon he went north into the upper settlements, and that time nought happened between him and Thorgeir, but out of this sprang up between them ill blood, as matters showed after.

CHAPTER XXVIII. Grettir comes out to Iceland again

This summer Grettir Asmundson came out to Skagafirth: he was in those days so famed a man for strength and prowess, that none was deemed his like among young men. He rode home to Biarg forthwith, and Asmund welcomed him meetly. At that time Atli managed the farming matters, and well things befell betwixt the brothers.

But now Grettir waxed so overbearing, that he deemed that nought was too much for him to do. At that time had many men grown into full manhood who were young in the days when Grettir was wont to play with them on Midfirth-water before he went abroad; one of these was Audun, who then dwelt at Audunstead, in Willowdale; he was the son of Asgeir, the son of Audun, the son of Asgeir Madpate; of all men he was the strongest north there; but he was thought to be the gentlest of neighbours. Now it came into Grettir's mind that he had had the worst of Audun in that ball-play whereof is told before; and now he would fain try which of the twain had ripened the most since then. For this cause Grettir took his way from home, and fared into Audunstead. This was in early mowing tide; Grettir was well dight, and rode in a fair-stained

saddle of very excellent workmanship, which Thorfinn had given him; a good horse he had withal, and all weapons of the best. Grettir came early in the day to Audunstead, and knocked at the door. Few folk were within; Grettir asked if Audun was at home. Men said that he had gone to fetch victuals from the hill-dairy. Then Grettir took the bridle off his horse; the field was unmowed, and the horse went whereas the grass was the highest. Grettir went into the hall, sat down on the seat-beam, and thereon fell asleep. Soon after Audun came home, and sees a horse grazing in the field with a fair-stained saddle on; Audun was bringing victuals on two horses, and carried curds on one of them, in drawn-up hides, tied round about: this fashion men called curd-bags. Audun took the loads off the horses and carried the curd-bags in his arms into the house.

Now it was dark before his eyes, and Grettir stretched his foot from out the beam so that Audun fell flat down head-foremost on to the curd-bag, whereby the bonds of the bag brake; Audun leaped up and asked who was that rascal in the way. Grettir named himself.

Then said Audun, "Rashly hast thou done herein; what is thine errand then?"

Grettir said, "I will fight with thee."

"First I will see about my victuals," said Audun.

"That thou mayst well do," said Grettir, "if thou canst not charge other folk therewith."

Then Audun stooped down and caught up the curd-bag and dashed it against Grettir's bosom, and bade him first take what was sent him; and therewith was Grettir all smothered in the curds; and a greater shame he deemed that than if Audun had given him a great wound.

Now thereon they rushed at one another and wrestled fiercely; Grettir set on with great eagerness, but Audun gave back before him. Yet he feels that Grettir has outgrown him in strength. Now all things in their way were kicked out of place, and they were borne on wrestling to and fro throughout all the hall; neither spared his might, but still Grettir was the toughest of the twain, and at last Audun fell, having torn all weapons from Grettir.

Now they grapple hard with one another, and huge cracking was all around them. Withal a great din was heard coming through the earth underneath the farmstead, and Grettir heard some one ride up to the houses, get off his horse, and stride in with great strides; he sees a man come up, of goodly growth, in a red kirtle and with a helmet on his head. He took his way into the hall, for he had heard clamorous doings there as they were struggling together; he asked what was in the hall.

Grettir named himself, "But who asks thereof?" quoth he.

"Bardi am I hight," said the new comer.

"Art thou Bardi, the son of Gudmund, from Asbiornsness?"

"That very man am I," said Bardi; "but what art thou doing?"

Grettir said, "We, Audun and I, are playing here in sport."

"I know not as to the sport thereof," said Bardi, "nor are ye even men either; thou art full of unfairness and overbearing, and he is easy and good to deal with; so let him stand up forthwith."

Grettir said, "*Many a man stretches round the door to the lock; and meseems it lies more in thy way to avenge thy brother Hall than to meddle in the dealings betwixt me and Audun.*"

"At all times I hear this," said Bardi, "nor know I if that will be avenged, but none the less I will that thou let Audun be at peace, for he is a quiet man."

Grettir did so at Bardi's bidding, nathless, little did it please him. Bardi asked for what cause they strove.

Grettir sang—

Prithee, Audun, who can tell,
But that now thy throat shall swell;
That from rough hands thou shalt gain
By our strife a certain pain.
E'en such wrong as I have done,
I of yore from Audun won,
When the young, fell-creeping lad
At his hands a choking had.

Bardi said that certes it was a matter to be borne with, if he had had to avenge himself.

"Now I will settle matters between you," quoth Bardi; "I will that ye part, leaving things as they are, that thereby there may be an end of all between you."

This they let hold good, but Grettir took ill liking to Bardi and his brothers.

Now they all rode off, and when they were somewhat on their way, Grettir spake—

"I have heard that thou hast will to go to Burgfirth this summer, and I now offer to go south with thee; and methinks that herein I do for thee more than thou art worthy of."

Hereat was Bardi glad, and speedily said yea thereto, and bade him have thanks for this; and thereupon they parted. But a little after Bardi came back and said—

"I will have it known that thou goest not unless my foster-father Thorarin will have it so, for he shall have all the rule of the faring."

"Well mightest thou, methinks, have full freedom as to thine own redes," said Grettir, "and my faring I will not have laid under the choice of other folk; and I shall mislike it if thou easiest me aside from thy fellowship."

Now either went their way, and Bardi said he should let Grettir know for sure if Thorarin would that he should fare with him, but that otherwise he might sit quiet at home. Grettir rode home to Biarg, but Bardi to his own house.

CHAPTER XXIX. Of the Horse-fight at Longfit.

That summer was settled to be a great horse-fight at Longfit, below Reeks. Thither came many men. Atli of Biarg had a good horse, a black-maned roan of Keingala's kin, and father and son had great love for that horse. The brothers, Kormak and Thorgils of Meal, had a brown horse, trusty in fight. These were to fight their horse against Atli of Biarg. And many other good horses were there.

Odd, the Foundling-skald, of Kormak's kin, was to follow the horse of his kinsman through the day. Odd was then growing a big man, and bragged much of himself, and was untameable and reckless. Grettir asked of Atli his brother, who should follow his horse.

"I am not so clear about that," said he.

"Wilt thou that I stand by it?" said Grettir.

"Be thou then very peaceable, kinsman," said Atli, "for here have we to deal with overbearing men."

"Well, let them pay for their own insolence," said Grettir, "if they know not how to hold it back."

Now are the horses led out, but all stood forth on the river-bank tied together. There was a deep hollow in the river down below the bank. The horses bit well at each other, and the greatest sport it was.

Odd drave on his horse with all his might, but Grettir held back, and seized the tail with one hand, and the staff wherewith he goaded the horse he held in the other. Odd stood far before his horse, nor was it so sure that he did not goad Atli's horse from his hold. Grettir made as if he saw it not. Now the horses bore forth towards the river. Then Odd drave his staff at Grettir, and smote the shoulder-blade, for that Grettir turned the shoulder towards him: that was so mighty a stroke, that the flesh shrank from under it, but Grettir was little scratched.

Now in that nick of time the horses reared up high, and Grettir ran under his horse's hocks, and thrust his staff so hard at the side of Odd that three ribs brake in him, but he was hurled out into deep water, together with his horse and all the horses that were tied together. Then men swam out to him and dragged him out of the river; then was a great hooting made thereat; Kormak's folk ran to their weapons, as did the men of Biarg in another place. But when the Ramfirthers and the men of Waterness saw that, they went betwixt them, and they were parted and went home, but both sides had ill-will one with the other, though they sat peacefully at home for a while.

Atli was sparing of speech over this, but Grettir was right unsparing, and said that they would meet another time if his will came to pass.

CHAPTER XXX. Of Thorbiorn Oxmain and Thorbiorn Tardy, and of Grettir's meeting with Kormak on Ramfirth-neck.

Thorbiorn was the name of a man who dwelt at Thorodstead in Ramfirth; he was the son of Arnor Hay-nose, the son of Thorod, who had settled Ramfirth on that side out as far as Bank was on the other.

Thorbiorn was the strongest of all men; he was called Oxmain. Thorod was the name of his brother, he was called Drapa-Stump; their mother was Gerd, daughter of Bodvar, from Bodvars-knolls. Thorbiorn was a great and hardy warrior, and had many men with him; he was noted as being worse at getting servants than other men, and barely gave he wages to any man, nor was he thought a good man to deal with. There was a kinsman of his hight Thorbiorn, and bynamed Tardy; he was a sailor, and the namesakes were partners. He was ever at Thorodstead, and was thought to better Thorbiorn but little. He was a fault-finding fellow, and went about jeering at most men.

There was a man hight Thorir, the son of Thorkel of Boardere. He farmed first at Meals in Ramfirth; his daughter was Helga, whom Sleita-Helgi had to wife, but after the man-slaying in Fairs-lope Thorir set up for himself his abode south in Hawkdale, and farmed at the Pass, and sold the land at Meals to Thorhall, son of Gamli the Vendlander. His son was Gamli, who had to wife Ranveig, daughter of Asmund the Greyhaired, and Grettir's sister. They dwelt at that time at Meals, and had good hap. Thorir of the Pass had two sons, one hight Gunnar, the other Thorgeir; they were both hopeful men, and had then taken the farm after their father, yet were for ever with Thorbiorn Oxmain, and were growing exceeding unruly.

The summer after that just told, Kormak and Thorgils and Narfi their kinsman rode south to Northriverdale, on some errand of theirs. Odd the Foundling-skald fared also with them, and by then was gotten healed of the stiffness he gained at the horse-fight. But while they were south of the heath, Grettir fared from Biarg, and with him two house-carles of Atli's. They rode over to Bowerfell, and thence over the mountain neck to Ramfirth, and came to Meals in the evening.

They were there three nights; Ranveig and Gamli welcomed Grettir well, and bade him abide with them, but he had will to ride home.

Then Grettir heard that Kormak and his fellows were come from the south, and had guested at Tongue through the night. Grettir got ready early to leave Meals; Gamli offered him men to go with him. Now Grim was the name of Gamli's brother; he was of all men the swiftest; he rode with Grettir with another man; they were five in all. Thus they rode on till they came to Ramfirth-neck, west of Bowerfell. There stands a huge stone that is called Grettir's heave; for he tried long that day to lift that stone, and thus they delayed till Kormak and his fellows were come. Grettir rode to meet them, and both sides jumped off their horses. Grettir said it was more like free men now to deal blows of the biggest, than to fight with staves like wandering churles. Then Kormak bade them take the challenge in manly wise, and do their best. Thereafter they ran at one another and fought. Grettir went before his men, and bade them take heed, that none came at his back. Thus they fought a while, and men were wounded on both sides.

Now Thorbiorn Oxmain had ridden that day over the neck to Bowerfell, and when he rode back he saw their meeting. There were with him then Thorbiorn the Tardy, and Gunnar and Thorgeir, Thorir's sons, and Thorod Drapa-Stump. Now when they came thereto, Thorbiorn called on his men to go between them. But the others were by then so eager that they could do nought. Grettir broke forth fiercely, and before him were the sons of Thorir, and they both fell as he thrust them from him; they waxed exceeding furious thereat, insomuch that Gunnar dealt a death-blow at a house-carle of Atli; and when Thorbiorn saw that, he bade them part, saying withal that he would aid which side soever should pay heed to his words. By then were fallen two house-carles of Kormak, but Grettir saw, that it would hardly do if Thorbiorn should bring aid to them against him, wherefore now

he gave up the battle, and all were wounded who had been at that meeting. But much it misliked Grettir that they had been parted.

Thereafter either side rode home, nor did they settle peace after these slayings. Thorbiorn the Tardy made much mocking at all this, therefore things began to worsen betwixt the men of Biarg and Thorbiorn Oxmain, so that therefrom fell much ill-will as came to be known after. No boot was bidden to Atli for his house-carle, but he made as if he knew it not. Grettir sat at home at Biarg until Twainmonth. Nor is it said in story that he and Kormak met ever again after these things betid.

CHAPTER XXXI. How Grettir met Bardi, the Son of Gudmund, as he came back from the Heath-slayings

Bardi, the son of Gudmund, and his brothers, rode home to Asbiornness after their parting with Grettir.

They were the sons of Gudmund, the son of Solmund. The mother of Solmund was Thorlaug, the daughter of Saemund, the South-Island man, the foster-brother of Ingimund the Old, and Bardi was a very noble man.

Now soon he rode to find Thorarin the Wise, his foster-father. He welcomed Bardi well, and asked what gain he had got of followers and aid, for they had before taken counsel over Bardi's journey. Bardi answered that he had got the aid of that man to his fellow, whose aid he deemed better than that of any other twain. Thorarin got silent thereat, and then said,

"That man will be Grettir Asmundson."

"*Sooth is the sage's guess*," said Bardi; "that is the very man, foster-father."

Thorarin answered, "True it is, that Grettir is much before any other man of those who are to choose in our land, and late will he be won with weapons, if he be hale, yet it misdoubts me how far he will bring thee luck; but of thy following all must not be luckless, and enough ye will do, though he fare not with thee: nowise shall he go if I may have my will."

"This I could not have deemed, foster-father," said he, "that thou wouldst grudge me the aid of the bravest of men, if my need should be hard. A man cannot foresee all things when he is driven on as methinks I am."

"Thou wilt do well," said Thorarin; "though thou abidest by my foresight."

Now thus must things be, even as Thorarin would, that no word more was sent to Grettir, but Bardi fared south to Burgfirth, and then befell the Heath-slayings.

Grettir was at Biarg when he heard that Bardi had ridden south; he started up in anger for that no word had been sent to him, and said that not thus should they part. He had news of them when they were looked for coming from the south, and thereat he rode down to Thorey's-peak, for the waylaying of Bardi's folk as they came back from the south: he fared from the homestead up on to the hill-side, and abode there. That same day rode Bardi and his men north over Twodaysway, from the Heath-slayings; they were six in all, and every man sore wounded; and when they came forth by the homestead, then said Bardi—

"A man there is up on the hill-side; a big man, armed. What man do ye take him to be?"

They said that they wotted not who he was.

Bardi said, "Methinks there," quoth he, "is Grettir Asmundson; and if so it is, there will he meet us. I deem that it has misliked him that he fared not with us, but methinks we are not in good case, if he be bent on doing us harm. I now shall send after men to Thorey's-peak, and stake nought on the chance of his ill-will."

They said this was a good rede, and so was it done.

Thereafter Bardi and his folk rode on their way. Grettir saw where they fared, and went in the way before them, and when they met, either greeted other.

Grettir asked for tidings, but Bardi told them fearlessly, even as they were. Grettir asked what men were in that journey with him. Bardi said that there were his brothers, and Eyulf his brother-in-law.

"Thou hast now cleared thyself from all blame," said Grettir; "but now is it best that we try between us who is of most might here."

Said Bardi, "Too nigh to my garth have deeds of hard need been, than that I should fight with thee without a cause, and well methinks have I thrust these from me."

"Thou growest soft, methinks, Bardi," said Grettir, "since thou durst not fight with me."

"Call that what thou wilt," said Bardi; "but in some other stead would I that thou wreak thine high-handedness than here on me; and that is like enough, for now does thy rashness pass all bounds."

Grettir thought ill of his spædom, and now doubted within himself whether he should set on one or other of them; but it seemed rash to him, as they were six and he one: and in that nick of time came up the men from Thorey's-peak to the aid of Bardi and his folk; then Grettir drew off from them, and turned aside to his horse. But Bardi and his fellows went on their way, nor were there farewells between them at parting.

No further dealings between Bardi and Grettir are told of after these things betid.

Now so has Grettir said that he deemed himself well matched to fight with most men, though they were three together, but he would have no mind to flee before four, without trying it; but against more would he fight only if he must needs defend his hand, as is said in this stave—

My life trust I 'gainst three
Skilled in Mist's mystery;
Whatso in Hilda's weather
Shall bring the swords together;
If over four they are
My wayfaring that bar
No gale of swords will I
Wake with them willingly.

After his parting with Bardi, Grettir fared to Biarg, and very ill he it thought that he might nowhere try his strength, and searched all about if anywhere might be somewhat wherewith he might contend.

CHAPTER XXXII. Of the Haunting at Thorhall-stead; and how Thorhall took a Shepherd by the rede of Skapti the Lawman, and of what befell thereafter

There was a man hight Thorhall, who dwelt at Thorhall-stead, in Shady-vale, which runs up from Waterdale. Thorhall was the son of Grim, son of Thorhall, the son of Fridmund, who settled Shady-vale. Thorhall had a wife hight Gudrun. Grim was their son, and Thurid their daughter; they were well-nigh grown up.

Thorhall was a rich man, but mostly in cattle, so that no man had so much of live-stock as he. He was no chief, but an honest bonder he was. Much was that place haunted, and hardly could he get a shepherd that he deemed should serve his turn. He sought counsel of many men as to what he might do therewith, but none gave him a rede that might serve him. Thorhall rode each summer to the Thing, and good horses he had. But one summer at the Althing, Thorhall went to the booth of Skapti Thorodson the Lawman. Skapti was the wisest of men, and wholesome were his reds when folk prayed him for them. But he and his father differed thus much, that Thorod was foretelling, and yet was called under-handed of some folk; but Skapti showed forth to every man what he deemed would avail most, if it were not departed from, therefore was he called "Father-betterer."

Now Thorhall went into Skapti's booth, and Skapti greeted him well, for he knew that he was a man rich in cattle, and he asked him what were the tidings.

Thorhall answered, "A wholesome counsel would I have from thee."

"Little am I meet for that," said Skapti; "but what dost thou stand in need of?"

Thorhall said, "So is the matter grown to be, that but a little while do my shepherds avail me; for ever will they get badly hurt; but others will not serve to the end, and now no one will take the job when he knows what bides in the way."

Skapti answered, "Some evil things shall be there then, since men are more unwilling to watch thy sheep than those of other men. Now, therefore, as thou hast sought rede of me, I shall get thee a shepherd who is hight Glam, a Swede, from Sylgsdale, who came out last summer, a big man and a strong, though he is not much to the mind of most folk."

Thorhall said he heeded that little if he watched the sheep well.

Skapti said that little would be the look out for others, if he could not watch them, despite his strength and daring.

Then Thorhall went out from him, and this was towards the breaking up of the Thing. Thorhall missed two dun horses, and fared himself to seek for them; wherefore folk deem that he was no great man. He went up to Sledgehill, and south along the fell which is called Armansfell; then he saw how a man fared down from Godi's-wood, and bore faggots on a horse. Soon they met together, and Thorhall asked him of his name. He said that he was called Glam. This man was great of growth, uncouth to look on; his eyes were grey and glaring, and his hair was wolf-grey.

Thorhall stared at him somewhat when he saw this man, till he saw that this was he to whom he had been sent.

"What work hast thou best will to do?" said Thorhall.

Glam said, "That he was of good mind to watch sheep in winter."

"Wilt thou watch my sheep?" said Thorhall. "Skapti has given thee to my will."

"So only shall my service avail thee, if I go of my own will, for I am evil of mood if matters mislike me," quoth Glam.

"I fear no hurt thereof," said Thorhall, "and I will that thou fare to my house."

"That may I do," said Glam, "perchance there are some troubles there?"

"Folk deem the place haunted," said Thorhall.

"Such bugs will not scare me," quoth Glam; "life seems to me less irksome thereby."

"It must needs seem so," said Thorhall, "and truly it is better that a mannikin be not there."

Thereafter they struck bargain together, and Glam is to come at winter nights: then they parted, and Thorhall found his horses even where he had just been searching. Thorhall rode home, and thanked Skapti for his good deed.

Summer slipped away, and Thorhall heard nought of his shepherd, nor did any man know aught about him; but at the appointed time he came to Thorhall-stead. The bonder greeted him well, but none of the other folk could abide him, and the good wife least of all.

Now he took to the sheep-watching, and little trouble it seemed to give him; he was big-voiced and husky, and all the beasts would run together when he whooped. There was a church at Thorhall-stead, but nowise would Glam come therein; he was a loather of church-song, and godless, foul-tempered, and surly, and no man might abide him.

Now passed the time till it came to Yule-eve; then Glam got up and straightway called for his meat. The good wife said—

"No Christian man is wont to eat meat this day, be- cause that on the morrow is the first day of Yule," says she, "wherefore must men first fast to-day."

He answers, "Many follies have ye, whereof I see no good come, nor know I that men fare better now than when they paid no heed to such things; and methinks the ways of men were better when they were called heathens; and now will I have my meat, and none of this fooling."

Then said the housewife, "I know for sure that thou shall fare ill to-day, if thou takest up this evil turn."

Glam bade her bring food straightway, and said that she should fare the worse else. She durst do but as he would, and so when he was full, he went out, growling and grumbling.

Now the weather was such, that mirk was over all, and the snow-flakes drave down, and great din there was, and still all grew much the worse, as the day slipped away.

Men heard the shepherd through the early morning, but less of him as the day wore; then it took to snowing, and by evening there was a great storm; then men went to church, and thus time drew on to nightfall; and Glam came not home; then folk held talk,

as to whether search should not be made for him, but, because of the snow-storm and pitch darkness, that came to nought.

Now he came not home on the night of Yule-eve; and thus men abide till after the time of worship; but further on in the day men fared out to the search, and found the sheep scattered wide about in fens, beaten down by the storm, or strayed up into the mountains. Thereafter they came on a great beaten place high up in the valley, and they thought it was as if strong wrestling had gone on there; for that all about the stones had been upturned and the earth withal; now they looked closely and saw where Glam lay a little way therefrom; he was dead, and as blue as hell, and as great as a neat.

Huge loathing took them, at the sight of him, and they shuddered in their souls at him, yet they strove to bring him to church, but could get him only as far as a certain gil-edge a little way below.

Then they fared home to the farm, and told the bonder what had happened. He asked what was like to have been Glam's bane. They said they had tracked steps as great as if a cask-bottom had been stamped down, from there where the beaten place was, up to beneath sheer rocks which were high up the valley, and there along went great stains of blood. Now men drew from this, that the evil might which had been there before had killed Glam, but had got such wounds as had been full enough for him, for of him none has since been ware.

The second day of Yule men went afresh to try to bring Glam to church; drag horses were put to him, but could move him nowhere where they had to go on even ground and not down hill; then folk had to go away therefrom leaving things done so far.

The third day the priest fared with them, and they sought all day, but found not Glam. The priest would go no more on such search, but the herdsman was found whenso the priest was not in their company. Then they let alone striving to bring him to church, and buried him there whereto he had been brought.

A little time after men were ware that Glam lay not quiet. Folk got great hurt therefrom, so that many fell into swoons when they saw him, but others lost their wits thereby. But just after Yule men thought they saw him home at the farm. Folk became exceeding afraid thereat, and many fled there and then. Next Glam took to riding the house-roofs at night, so that he went nigh to breaking them in. Now he walked well-nigh night and day. Hardly durst men fare up into the dale, though they had errands enough there. And much scathe the men of the country-side deemed all this.

CHAPTER XXXIII. Of the doings of Glam at Thorhall-stead.

In the spring Thorhall got serving-men, and set up house at his farm; then the hauntings began to go off while the sun was at its height; and so things went on to midsummer. That summer a ship came out to Hunawater, wherein was a man named Thorgaut. He was an outlander of kin, big and stout, and two men's strength he had. He was unhired and single, and would fain do some work, for he was moneyless. Now Thorhall rode to the ship, and asked Thorgaut if he would work for him. Thorgaut said that might be, and moreover that he was not nice about work.

"Be sure in thy mind," said Thorhall, "that mannikins are of small avail there because of the hauntings that have been going on there for one while now; for I will not draw thee on by wiles."

Thorgaut answers, "I deem not myself given up, though I should see some wraithlings; matters will not be light when I am scared, nor will I give up my service for that."

Now they come speedily to a bargain, and Thorgaut is to watch the sheep when winter comes. So the summer wore on, and Thorgaut betook himself to the shepherding at winter nights, and all liked him well. But ever came Glam home and rode the house-roofs; this Thorgaut deemed sport enough, and quoth he—

"The thrall must come nigher to scare me."

Thorhall bade him keep silence over that. "Better will it be that ye have no trial together."

Thorgaut said, "Surely all might is shaken out of you, nor shall I drop down betwixt morn and eve at such talk."

Now so things go through the winter till Yule-tide. On Yule eve the shepherd would fare out to his sheep. Then said the good wife—

"Need is it that things go not the old way."

He answered, "Have no fear thereof, goodwife; something worth telling of will betide if I come not back."

And thereafter he went to his sheep; and the weather was somewhat cold, and there was much snow. Thorgaut was wont to come home when twilight had set in, and now he came not at that time. Folk went to church as they were wont. Men now thought things looked not unlike what they did before; the bonder would have search made for the shepherd, but the church-goers begged off, and said that they would not give themselves into the hands of trolls by night; so the bonder durst not go, and the search came to nought.

Yule-day, when men were full, they fared out and searched for the shepherd; they first went to Glam's cairn, because men thought that from his deeds came the loss of the herdsman. But when they came nigh to the cairn, there they saw great tidings, for there they found the shepherd, and his neck was broken, and every bone in him smashed. Then they brought him to church, and no harm came to men from Thorgaut afterwards.

But Glam began afresh to wax mighty; and such deeds he wrought, that all men fled away from Thorhall-stead, except the good man and his goodwife. Now the same neatherd had long been there, and Thorhall would not let him go, because of his good will and safe ward; he was well on in years, and was very loth to fare away, for he saw that all things the bonder had went to nought from not being watched.

Now after midwinter one morning the housewife fared to the byre to milk the cows after the wonted time; by then was it broad daylight, for none other than the neatherd would trust themselves out before day; but he went out at dawn. She heard great cracking in the byre, with bellowing and roaring; she ran back crying out, and said she knew not what uncouth things were going on in the byre.

The bonder went out and came to the cows, which were goring one another; so he thought it not good to go in there, but went in to the hay-barn. There he saw where lay the neatherd, and had his head in one boose and his feet in the other; and he lay cast on his back. The bonder went up to him, and felt him all over with his hand, and finds soon that he was dead, and the spine of him broken asunder; it had been broken over the raised stone-edge of a boose.

Now the goodman thought there was no abiding there longer; so he fled away from the farm with all that he might take away; but all such live stock as was left behind Glam killed, and then he fared all over the valley and destroyed farms up from Tongue. But Thorhall was with his friends the rest of the winter.

No man might fare up the dale with horse or hound, because straightway it was slain. But when spring came, and the sun-light was the greatest, somewhat the hauntings abated; and now would Thorhall go back to his own land; he had no easy task in getting servants, nathless he set up house again at Thorhall-stead; but all went the same way as before; for when autumn came, the hauntings began to wax again; the bonder's daughter was most set on, and fared so that she died thereof. Many reds were sought, but nought could be done; men thought it like that all Waterdale would be laid waste if nought were found to better this.

CHAPTER XXXIV. Grettir hears of the Hauntings

Now we take up the story where Grettir Asmundson sat at Biarg through the autumn after they parted, he and Slaying-Bardi at Thoreys-peak; and when the time of winter-nights had well-nigh come, Grettir rode from home north over the neck to Willowdale, and guested at Audunstead; he and Audun made a full peace, and Grettir gave Audun a good axe, and they talked of friendship between them. Audun dwelt long at Audunstead, and was a man of many and hopeful kin; his son was Egil, who married Ulfheid, daughter of Eyulf Gudmundson, and their son was Eyulf, who was

slain at the Althing, he was the father of Orm, who was the chaplain of Bishop Thorlak.

Grettir rode north to Waterdale, and came to see his kin at Tongue. In those days dwelt there Jokull, the son of Bard, the mother's brother of Grettir: Jokull was a big man and a strong, and the most violent of men; he was a seafaring man, very wild, and yet a man of great account.

He greeted Grettir well, and he was there three nights. There were so many words about Glam's hauntings, that nought was so much spoken of as of that. Grettir asked closely about all things that had happened. Jokull said that thereof was told no more than the very truth; "And, perchance, thou art wishful to go there, kinsman?"

Grettir said that so it was.

Jokull bade him do it not, "Because it is a great risk for thy good luck, and thy kinsmen have much to hazard where thou art," said he, "for of young men we think there is none such as thou; but *from ill cometh ill* whereas Glam is; and far better it is to deal with men than with such evil wights."

Grettir said, "That he had a mind to go to Thorhall-stead and see how things went there."

Said Jokull, "Now I see it is of no avail to let thee; but so it is, as men say, *Good luck and goodness are twain*."

"*Woe is before one's own door when it is inside one's neighbour's*," think how it may fare with thyself ere things are ended," said Grettir.

Jokull answered, "Maybe we may both see somewhat of things to come, but neither may help aught herein."

They parted thereafter, and neither thought well of the other's foretelling.

CHAPTER XXXV. Grettir goes to Thorhall-stead, and has to do with Glam

Grettir rode to Thorhall-stead, and the bonder gave him good welcome; he asked whither Grettir was minded to fare, but Grettir said he would be there that night if the bonder would have it so.

Thorhall said that he thanked him therefor, "But few have thought it a treat to guest here for any time; thou must needs have heard what is going on here, and I fain would that thou shouldst have no trouble from me: but though thou shouldst come off whole thyself, that know I for sure, that thou wilt lose thy horse, for none keeps his horse whole who comes here."

Grettir said that horses were to be had in plenty whatsoever might hap to this. Then Thorhall was glad that Grettir was to be there, and gave him a hearty welcome.

Now Grettir's horse was locked up in a strong house, and they went to sleep; and so the night slipped by, and Glam came into home.

Then said Thorhall, "Things have gone well at thy coming, for every night is Glam wont to ride the house-roofs, or break open doors, as thou mayest well see."

Grettir said, "Then shall one of two things be, either he shall not hold himself back for long, or the hauntings will abate for more than one night; I will bide here another night and see how things fare."

Thereafter they went to Grettir's horse, and nought had been tried against it; then all seemed to the bonder to go one way.

Now is Grettir there another night, and neither came the thrall home; that the farmer deemed very hopeful; withal he fared to see after Grettir's horse. When the farmer came there, he found the house broken into, but the horse was dragged out to the door, and every bone in him broken to pieces. Thorhall told Grettir what had happened there, and bade him save himself, "For sure is thy death if thou abidest Glam."

Grettir answered, "I must not have less for my horse than a sight of the thrall."

The bonder said it was no boon to see him, for he was unlike any shape of man; "but good methinks is every hour that thou art here."

Now the day goes by, and when men should go to sleep Grettir would not put off his clothes, but lay down on the seat over against the bonder's lock-bed. He had a drugget cloak over him,

and wrapped one skirt of it under his feet, and twined the other under his head, and looked out through the head-opening; a seat-beam was before the seat, a very strong one, and against this he set his feet. The door-fittings were all broken from the outer door, but a wrecked door was now bound thereby, and all was fitted up in the wretchedest wise. The panelling which had been before the seat athwart the hall, was all broken away both above and below the cross-beam; all beds had been torn out of place, and an uncouth place it was.

Light burned in the hall through the night; and when the third part of the night was passed, Grettir heard huge din without, and then one went up upon the houses and rode the hall, and drave his heels against the thatch so that every rafter cracked again.

That went on long, and then he came down from the house and went to the door; and as the door opened, Grettir saw that the thrall stretched in his head, which seemed to him monstrously big, and wondrous thick cut.

Glam fared slowly when he came into the door and stretched himself high up under the roof, and turned looking along the hall, and laid his arms on the tie-beam, and glared inwards over the place. The farmer would not let himself be heard, for he deemed he had had enough in hearing himself what had gone on outside. Grettir lay quiet, and moved no whit; then Glam saw that some bundle lay on the seat, and therewith he stalked up the hall and griped at the wrapper wondrous hard; but Grettir set his foot against the beam, and moved in no wise; Glam pulled again much harder, but still the wrapper moved not at all; the third time he pulled with both hands so hard, that he drew Grettir upright from the seat; and now they tore the wrapper asunder between them.

Glam gazed at the rag he held in his hand, and wondered much who might pull so hard against him; and therewithal Grettir ran under his hands and gripped him round the middle, and bent back his spine as hard as he might, and his mind it was that Glam should shrink thereat; but the thrall lay so hard on Grettir's arms, that he shrank all aback because of Glam's strength.

Then Grettir bore back before him into sundry seats; but the seat-beams were driven out of place, and all was broken that was before them. Glam was fain to get out, but Grettir set his feet against all things that he might; nathless Glam got him dragged from out the hall; there had they a wondrous hard wrestling, because the thrall had a mind to bring him out of the house; but Grettir saw that ill as it was to deal with Glam within doors, yet worse would it be without; therefore he struggled with all his might and main against going out-a-doors.

Now Glam gathered up his strength and knit Grettir towards him when they came to the outer door; but when Grettir saw that he might not set his feet against that, all of a sudden in one rush he drave his hardest against the thrall's breast, and spurned both feet against the half-sunken stone that stood in the threshold of the door; for this the thrall was not ready, for he had been tugging to draw Grettir to him, therefore he reeled aback and spun out against the door, so that his shoulders caught the upper door-case, and the roof burst asunder, both rafters and frozen thatch, and therewith he fell open-armed aback out of the house, and Grettir over him.

Bright moonlight was there without, and the drift was broken, now drawn over the moon, now driven from off her; and, even as Glam fell, a cloud was driven from the moon, and Glam glared up against her. And Grettir himself says that by that sight only was he dismayed amidst all that he ever saw.

Then his soul sank within him so, from all these things both from weariness, and because he had seen Glam turn his eyes so horribly, that he might not draw the short-sword, and lay well-nigh 'twixt home and hell.

But herein was there more fiendish craft in Glam than in most other ghosts, that he spake now in this wise—

"Exceeding eagerly hast thou wrought to meet me, Grettir, but no wonder will it be deemed, though thou gettest no good hap of me; and this must I tell thee, that thou now hast got half the strength and manhood, which was thy lot if thou hadst not met me: now I may not take from thee the strength which thou hast got before this; but that may I rule, that thou shalt never be mightier than now thou art; and nathless art thou mighty enow, and that

shall many an one learn. Hitherto hast thou earned fame by thy deeds, but henceforth will wrongs and man-slayings fall on thee, and the most part of thy doings will turn to thy woe and ill-hap; an outlaw shalt thou be made, and ever shall it be thy lot to dwell alone abroad; therefore this weird I lay on thee, ever in those days to see these eyes with thine eyes, and thou wilt find it hard to be alone—and that shall drag thee unto death."

Now when the thrall had thus said, the astonishment fell from Grettir that had lain on him, and therewith he drew the short-sword and hewed the head from Glam, and laid it at his thigh.

Then came the farmer out; he had clad himself while Glam had his spell going, but he durst come nowhere nigh till Glam had fallen.

Thorhall praised God therefor, and thanked Grettir well for that he had won this unclean spirit. Then they set to work and burned Glam to cold coals, thereafter they gathered his ashes into the skin of a beast, and dug it down whereas sheep-pastures were fewest, or the ways of men. They walked home thereafter, and by then it had got far on towards day; Grettir laid him down, for he was very stiff: but Thorhall sent to the nearest farm for men, and both showed them and told them how all things had fared.

All men who heard thereof deemed this a deed of great worth, and in those days it was said by all that none in all the land was like to Grettir Asmundson for great heart and prowess.

Thorhall saw off Grettir handsomely, and gave him a good horse and seemly clothes, for those were all torn to pieces that he had worn before; so they parted in friendly wise. Grettir rode thence to the Ridge in Waterdale, and Thorvald received him well, and asked closely about the struggle with Glam. Grettir told him all, and said thereto that he had never had such a trial of strength, so long was their struggle.

Thorvald bade him keep quiet, "Then all will go well with thee, else wilt thou be a man of many troubles."

Grettir said that his temper had been nowise bettered by this, that he was worse to quiet than before, and that he deemed all trouble worse than it was; but that herein he found the greatest change, in that he was become so fearsome a man in the dark, that he durst go nowhither alone after nightfall, for then he seemed to see all kinds of horrors.

And that has fallen since into a proverb, that Glam lends eyes, or gives Glamsight to those who see things nowise as they are.

But Grettir rode home to Biarg when he had done his errands, and sat at home through the winter.

CHAPTER XXXVI. Of Thorbiorn Oxmain's autumn-feast, and the mocks of Thorbiorn Tardy

Thorbiorn Oxmain held a great autumn feast, and many men came thither to him, and that was while Grettir fared north to Waterdale in the autumn; Thorbiorn the Tardy was there at the feast, and many things were spoken of there. There the Ramfirthers asked of those dealings of Grettir on the neck the summer before.

Thorbiorn Oxmain told the story right fairly as towards Grettir, and said that Kormak would have got the worst of it, if none had come there to part them.

Then spake Thorbiorn the Tardy, "Both these things are true," said he: "I saw Grettir win no great honour, and I deem withal that fear shot through his heart when we came thereto, and right blithe was he to part, nor did I see him seek for vengeance when Atli's house-carle was slain; therefore do I deem that there is no heart in him if he is not holpen enow."

And thereat Thorbiorn went on gabbling at his most; but many put in a word, and said that this was worthless fooling, and that Grettir would not leave things thus, if he heard that talk.

Nought else befell worth telling of at the feast, and men went home; but much ill-will there was betwixt them that winter, though neither set on other; nor were there other tidings through the winter.

CHAPTER XXXVII. Olaf the Saint, King in Norway; the slaying of Thorbiorn Tardy; Grettir goes to Norway

Early the spring after came out a ship from Norway; and that was before the Thing; these folk knew many things to tell, and first that there was change of rulers in Norway, for Olaf Haraldson was come to be king, and Earl Svein had fled the country in the spring after the fight at Ness. Many noteworthy matters were told of King Olaf, and this withal, that he received such men in the best of ways who were of prowess in any deeds, and that he made such his men.

Thereat were many young men glad, and listed to go abroad, and when Grettir heard the tidings he became much minded to sail out; for he, like others, hoped for honour at the king's hands.

A ship lay in Goose-ere in Eyjafirth, therein Grettir got him a berth and made ready for the voyage, nor had he yet much of faring-goods.

Now Asmund was growing very feeble with eld, and was well-nigh bedridden; he and Asdis had a young son who was called Il-lugi, and was the hopefulest of men; and, by this time, Atli tended all farming and money-keeping, and this was deemed to better matters, because he was a peaceable and foreseeing man.

Now Grettir went shipward, but in that same ship had Thorbiorn the Tardy taken passage, before folk knew that Grettir would sail therein. Now men would hinder Thorbiorn from sailing in the same ship with Grettir, but Thorbiorn said that he would go for all that. He gat him ready for the voyage out, and was somewhat late thereat, nor did he come to the north to Goose-ere before the ship was ready for sea; and before Thorbiorn fared from the west, Asmund the Greyhaired fell sick and was bedridden.

Now Thorbiorn the Tardy came late one day down to the sand; men were getting ready to go to table, and were washing their hands outside the booths; but when Thorbiorn rode up the lane betwixt the booths, he was greeted, and asked for tidings. He made as if there was nought to tell, "Save that I deem that Asmund, the champion of Biarg, is now dead."

Many men said that there where he went, departed a worthy Goodman from the world.

"But what brought it about?" said they.

He answered, "Little went to the death of that champion, for in the chamber smoke was he smothered like a dog; nor is there loss therein, for he was grown a dotard."

"Thou speakest marvellously of such a man," said they, "nor would Grettir like thy words well, if he heard them."

"That must I bear," said Thorbiorn, "and higher must Grettir bear the sword than he did last summer at Ramfirth-neck, if I am to tremble at him."

Now Grettir heard full well what Thorbiorn said, and paid no heed thereto while he let his tale run on; but when he had made an end, then spake Grettir—

"That fate I foretell for thee, Tardy," said he, "that thou wilt not die in chamber smoke, yet may be withal thou wilt not die of eld; but it is strangely done to speak scorn of sackless men."

Thorbiorn said, "I have no will to hold in about these things, and methinks thou didst not bear thyself so briskly when we got thee off that time when the men of Meals beat thee like a neat's head."

Then sang Grettir—

Day by day full over long,
Arrow-dealer, grows thy tongue;
Such a man there is, that thou
Mayst be paid for all words now;
Many a man, who has been fain,
Wound-worm's tower with hands to gain,
With less deeds his death has bought,
Than thou, Tardy-one, hast wrought.

Said Thorbiorn, "About as feign do I deem myself as before, despite thy squealing."

Grettir answered, "Heretofore my spædom has not been long-lived, and so shall things go still; now beware if thou wilt, hereafter will no out-look be left."

Therewith Grettir hewed at Thorbiorn, but he swung up his hand, with the mind to ward the stroke from him, but that stroke

came on his arm about the wrist, and withal the short-sword drave into his neck so that the head was smitten off.

Then said the chapmen that he was a man of mighty strokes, and that such should king's men be; and no scathe they deemed it though Thorbiorn were slain, in that he had been both quarrelsome and spiteful.

A little after they sailed into the sea, and came in late summer to Norway, south at Hordaland, and then they heard that King Olaf was north at Drontheim; then Grettir took ship in a trading keel to go north therefrom, because he would fain see the king.

CHAPTER XXXVIII. Of Thorir of Garth and his sons; and how Grettir fetched fire for his shipmates

There was a man named Thorir, who lived at Garth, in Maindale, he was the son of Skeggi, the son of Botulf. Skeggi had settled Well-wharf up to Well-ness; he had to wife Helga, daughter of Thorkel, of Fishbrook; Thorir, his son, was a great chief, and a seafaring man. He had two sons, one called Thorgeir and one Skeggi, they were both hopeful men, and fully grown in those days. Thorir had been in Norway that summer, when King Olaf came east from England, and got into great friendship with the king, and with Bishop Sigurd as well; and this is a token thereof, that Thorir had had a large ship built in the wood, and prayed Bishop Sigurd to hallow it, and so he did. Thereafter Thorir fared out to Iceland and caused the ship to be broken up, when he grew weary of sailing, but the beaks of the ship, he had set up over his outer door, and they were there long afterwards, and were so full of weather wisdom, that the one whistled before a south wind, and the other before a north wind.

But when Thorir knew that King Olaf had got the sole rule over all Norway, he deemed that he had some friendship there to fall back on; then he sent his sons to Norway to meet the king, and was minded that they should become his men. They came there south, late in autumn, and got to themselves a row-berke, and fared north along the land, with the mind to go and meet the king.

They came to a haven south of Stead, and lay there some nights, and kept themselves in good case as to meat and drink, and were not much abroad when the weather was foul.

Now it is to be told that Grettir and his fellows fared north along the land, and often had hard weather, because it was then the beginning of winter; and when they bore down north on Stead, they had much foul weather, with snow and frost, and with exceeding trouble they make land one evening all much worn with wet; so they lay to by a certain dyke, and could thus save their money and goods; the chapmen were hard put to it for the cold, because they could not light any fire, though thereon they deemed well-nigh their life and health lay.

Thus they lay that evening in evil plight; but as the night wore on they saw that a great fire sprang up in the midst of the sound over against there whereas they had come. But when Grettir's shipmates saw the fire, they said one to the other that he would be a happy man who might get it, and they doubted whether they should unmoor the ship, but to all of them there seemed danger in that. Then they had a long talk over it, whether any man was of might enow to fetch that fire.

Grettir gave little heed thereto, but said, that such men had been as would not have feared the task. The chapmen said that they were not bettered by what had been, if now there was nought to take to.

"Perchance thou deemest thyself man enough thereto, Grettir," said they, "since thou art called the man of most prowess among the men of Iceland, and thou wottest well enough what our need is."

Grettir answered, "It seems to me no great deed to fetch the fire, but I wot not if ye will reward it according to the prayer of him who does it."

They said, "Why deemest thou us such shameful men as that we should reward that deed but with good?"

Quoth he, "I may try this if so be that ye think much lies on it, but my mind bids me hope to get nought of good thereby."

They said that that should never be, and bade all hail to his words; and thereafter Grettir made ready for swimming, and cast his clothes from off him; of clothes he had on but a cape and sail-cloth breeches; he girt up the cape and tied a bast-rope strongly round his middle, and had with him a cask; then he leaped overboard; he stretched across the sound, and got aland.

There he saw a house stand, and heard therefrom the talk of men, and much clatter, and therewith he turned toward that house.

Now is it to be said of those that were there before, that here were come the sons of Thorir, as is aforesaid; they had lain there many nights, and bided there the falling of the gale, that they might have wind at will to go north, beyond Stead. They had set them down a-drinking, and were twelve men in all; their ship rode in the main haven, and they were at a house of refuge for such men to guest in, as went along the coast.

Much straw had been borne into the house, and there was a great fire on the floor; Grettir burst into the house, and wotted not who was there before; his cape was all over ice when he came aland, and he himself was wondrous great to behold, even as a troll; now those first comers were exceeding amazed at him, and deemed he must be some evil wight; they smote at him with all things they might lay hold of, and mighty din went on around them; but Grettir put off all blows strongly with his arms, then some smote him with fire-brands, and the fire burst off over all the house, and therewith he got off with the fire and fared back again to his fellows.

They mightily praised his journey and the prowess of it, and said that his like would never be. And now the night wore, and they deemed themselves happy in that they had got the fire.

The next morning the weather was fair; the chapmen woke early and got them ready to depart, and they talked together that now they should meet those who had had the rule of that fire, and wot who they were.

Now they unmoored their ship, and crossed over the sound; there they found no hall, but saw a great heap of ashes, and found therein many bones of men; then they deemed that this house of refuge had been utterly burned up, with all those men who had been therein.

Thereat they asked if Grettir had brought about that ill-hap, and said that it was the greatest misdeed.

Grettir said, that now had come to pass even as he had misdoubted, that they should reward him ill for the fetching of the fire, and that it was ill to help unmanly men.

Grettir got such hurt of this, that the chapmen said, wheresoever they came, that Grettir had burned those men. The news soon got abroad that in that house were lost the aforesaid sons of Thorir of Garth, and their fellows; then they drave Grettir from their ship and would not have him with them; and now he became so ill looked on that scarce any one would do good to him.

Now he deemed that matters were utterly hopeless, but before all things would go to meet the king, and so made north to Drontheim. The king was there before him, and knew all or ever Grettir came there, who had been much slandered to the king. And Grettir was some days in the town before he could get to meet the king.

CHAPTER XXXIX. How Grettir would fain bear Iron before the King

Now on a day when the king sat in council, Grettir went before the king and greeted him well. The king looked at him and said, "Art thou Grettir the Strong?"

He answered, "So have I been called, and for that cause am I come to thee, that I hope from thee deliverance from the evil tale that is laid on me, though I deem that I nowise wrought that deed."

King Olaf said, "Thou art great enough, but I know not what luck thou mayest bear about to cast off this matter from thee; but it is like, indeed, that thou didst not willingly burn the men."

Grettir said he was fain to put from him this slander, if the king thought he might do so; the king bade him tell truthfully, how it had gone betwixt him and those men: Grettir told him all, even

as has been said before, and this withal, that they were all alive when he came out with the fire—

"And now I will offer to free myself in such wise as ye may deem will stand good in law therefor."

Olaf the king said, "We will grant thee to bear iron for this matter if thy luck will have it so."

Grettir liked this exceeding well; and now took to fasting for the iron; and so the time wore on till the day came whereas the trial should come off; then went the king to the church, and the bishop and much folk, for many were eager to have a sight of Grettir, so much as had been told of him.

Then was Grettir led to the church, and when he came thither, many of those who were there before gazed at him and said one to the other, that he was little like to most folk, because of his strength and greatness of growth.

Now, as Grettir went up the church-floor, there started up a lad of ripe growth, wondrous wild of look, and he said to Grettir—

"Marvellous is now the custom in this land, as men are called Christians therein, that ill-doers, and folk riotous, and thieves shall go their ways in peace and become free by trials; yea, and what would the evil man do but save his life while he might? So here now is a misdoer, proven clearly a man of misdeeds, and has burnt sackless men withal, and yet shall he, too, have a trial to free him; ah, a mighty ill custom!"

Therewith he went up to Grettir and pointed finger, and wagged head at him, and called him mermaid's son, and many other ill names.

Grettir grew wroth beyond measure hereat, and could not keep himself in; he lifted up his fist, and smote the lad under the ear, so that forthwith he fell down stunned, but some say that he was slain there and then. None seemed to know whence that lad came or what became of him, but men are mostly minded to think, that it was some unclean spirit, sent thither for Grettir's hurt.

Now a great clamour rose in the church, and it was told the king, "He who should bear the iron is smiting all about him;" then King Olaf went down the church, and saw what was going on, and spake—

"A most unlucky man art thou," said he, "that now the trial should not be, as ready as all things were thereto, nor will it be easy to deal with thine ill-luck."

Grettir answered, "I was minded that I should have gained more honour from thee, Lord, for the sake of my kin, than now seems like to be;" and he told withal how men were faring to King Olaf, as was said afore, "and now I am fain," said he, "that thou wouldest take me to thee; thou hast here many men with thee, who will not be deemed more like men-at-arms than I?"

"That see I well," said the king, "that few men are like unto thee for strength and stoutness of heart, but thou art far too luckless a man to abide with us: now shall thou go in peace for me, where-soever thou wilt, the winter long, but next summer go thou out to Iceland, for there will it be thy fate to leave thy bones."

Grettir answered, "First would I put from me this affair of the burning, if I might, for I did not the deed willingly."

"It is most like," said the king; "but yet, because the trial is now come to nought for thy heedlessness' sake, thou wilt not get this charge cast from thee more than now it is, *For ill-heed still to ill doth lead*, and if ever man has been cursed, of all men must thou have been."

So Grettir dwelt a while in the town thereafter, but dealt no more with the king than has been told.

Then he fared into the south country, and was minded east for Tunsberg, to find Thorstein Dromond, his brother, and there is nought told of his travels till he came east to Jadar.

CHAPTER XL. Of Grettir and Snoekoll

At yule came Grettir to a bonder who was called Einar, he was a rich man, and was married and had one daughter of marriageable age, who was called Gyrid; she was a fair woman, and was deemed a right good match; Einar bade Grettir abide with him through Yule, and that proffer he took.

Then was it the wont far and wide in Norway that woodmen and misdoers would break out of the woods and challenge men

for their women, or they took away men's goods with violence, whereas they had not much help of men.

Now it so befell here, that one day in Yule there came to Einar the bonder many ill-doers together, and he was called Snoekoll who was the head of them, and a great bearserk he was. He challenged goodman Einar to give up his daughter, or to defend her, if he thought himself man enough thereto; but the bonder was then past his youth, and was no man for fighting; he deemed he had a great trouble on his hands, and asked Grettir, in a whisper, what rede he would give thereto: "Since thou art called a famous man," Grettir bade him say yea to those things alone, which he thought of no shame to him.

The bearserk sat on his horse, and had a helm on his head, but the cheek-pieces were not made fast; he had an iron-rimmed shield before him, and went on in the most monstrous wise.

Now he said to the bonder, "Make one or other choice speedily, or what counsel is that big churl giving thee who stands there before thee; is it not so that he will play with me?"

Grettir said, "We are about equal herein, the bonder and I, for neither of us is skilled in arms."

Snoekoll said, "Ye will both of you be somewhat afraid to deal with me, if I grow wroth."

"That is known when it is tried," said Grettir.

Now the bearserk saw that there was some edging out of the matter going on, and he began to roar aloud, and bit the rim of his shield, and thrust it up into his mouth, and gaped over the corner of the shield, and went on very madly. Grettir took a sweep along over the field, and when he came alongside of the bearserk's horse, sent up his foot under the tail of the shield so hard, that the shield went up into the mouth of him, and his throat was riven asunder, and his jaws fell down on his breast. Then he wrought so that, all in one rush, he caught hold of the helmet with his left hand, and swept the viking off his horse; and with the other hand drew the short-sword that he was girt withal, and drave it at his neck, so that off the head flew. But when Snoekoll's fellows saw that, they fled, each his own way, and Grettir had no mind to follow, for he saw there was no heart in them.

The bonder thanked him well for his work and many other men too; and that deed was deemed to have been wrought both swiftly and hardily.

Grettir was there through Yule, and the farmer saw him off handsomely: then he went east to Tunsberg, and met his brother Thorstein; he received Grettir fondly, and asked of his travels and how he won the bearserk. Then Grettir sang a stave—

There the shield that men doth save
Mighty spurn with foot I gave.
Snoekoll's throat it smote aright,
The fierce follower of the fight,
And by mighty dint of it
Were the tofts of tooth-hedge split;
The strong spear-walk's iron rim,
Tore adown the jaws of him.

Thorstein said, "Deft wouldst thou be at many things, kinsman, if mishaps went not therewith."

Grettir answered, "*Deeds done will be told of*."

CHAPTER XLI. Of Thorstein Dromond's Arms, and what he deemed they might do

Now Grettir was with Thorstein for the rest of the winter and on into the spring; and it befell one morning, as those brothers, Thorstein and Grettir, lay in their sleeping-loft, that Grettir had laid his arms outside the bed-clothes; and Thorstein was awake and saw it. Now Grettir woke up a little after, and then spake Thorstein:

"I have seen thine arms, kinsman," said he, "and I deem it nowise wonderful, though thy strokes fall heavy on many, for no man's arms have I seen like thine."

"Thou mayst know well enough," said Grettir, "that I should not have brought such things to pass as I have wrought, if I were not well knit."

"Better should I deem it," said Thorstein, "if they were slenderer and somewhat luckier withal."

Grettir said, "True it is, as folk say, *No man makes himself*; but let me see thine arms," said he.

Thorstein did so; he was the longest and gauntest of men; and Grettir laughed, and said,

"No need to look at that longer; hooked together are the ribs in thee; nor, methinks, have I ever seen such tongs as thou bearest about, and I deem thee to be scarce of a woman's strength."

"That may be," said Thorstein; "yet shall thou know that these same thin arms shall avenge thee, else shall thou never be avenged; who may know what shall be, when all is over and done?"

No more is told of their talk together; the spring wore on, and Grettir took ship in the summer. The brothers parted in friendship, and saw each other never after.

CHAPTER XLII. Of the Death of Asmund the Grey haired

Now must the tale be taken up where it was left before, for Thorbiorn Oxmain heard how Thorbiorn Tardy was slain, as aforesaid, and broke out into great wrath, and said it would please him well that *now this and now that should have strokes in his garth*

Asmund the Greyhaired lay long sick that summer, and when he thought his ailings drew closer on him, he called to him his kin, and said that it was his will, that Atli should have charge of all his goods after his day.

"But my mind misgives me," said Asmund, "that thou mayst scarce sit quiet because of the iniquity of men, and I would that all ye of my kin should help him to the uttermost but of Grettir nought can I say, for methinks overmuch on a whirling wheel his life turns; and though he be a mighty man, yet I fear me that he will have to heed his own troubles more than the helping of his kin: but Illugi, though he be young, yet shall he become a man of prowess, if he keep himself whole."

So, when Asmund had settled matters about his sons as he would, his sickness lay hard on him, and in a little while he died, and was laid in earth at Biarg; for there had he let make a church; but his death his neighbours deemed a great loss.

Now Atli became a mighty bonder, and had many with him, and was a great gatherer of household-stuff. When the summer was far gone, he went out to Snowfellness to get him stockfish. He drave many horses, and rode from home to Meals in Ramfirth to Gamli his brother-in-law; and on this journey rode with him Grim Thorhallson, Gamli's brother, and another man withal. They rode west to Hawkdale Pass, and so on, as the road lay west to Ness: there they bought much stockfish, and loaded seven horses therewith, and turned homeward when they were ready.

CHAPTER XLIII. The Onset on Atli at the Pass and the Slaying of Gunnar and Thorgeir

Thorbiorn Oxmain heard that Atli and Grim were on a journey from home, and there were with him the sons of Thorir from the Pass, Gunnar and Thorgeir. Now Thorbiorn envied Atli for his many friendships, and therefore he egged on the two brothers, the sons of Thorir, to way-lay Atli as he came back from the outer ness. Then they rode home to the Pass, and abode there till Atli and his fellows went by with their train; but when they came as far as the homestead at the Pass, their riding was seen, and those brothers brake out swiftly with their house-carles and rode after them; but when Atli and his folk saw their faring, Atli bade them take the loads from the horses, "for perchance they will give me atonement for my house-carle, whom Gunnar slew last summer. Let us not begin the work, but defend ourselves if they be first to raise strife with us."

Now the brothers came up and leaped off their horses. Atli welcomed them, and asked for tidings: "Perchance, Gunnar, thou wilt give me some atonement for my house-carle."

Gunnar answered, "Something else is your due, men of Biarg, than that I should lay down aught good therefor; yea, atonement is due withal for the slaying of Thorbiorn, whom Grettir slew."

"It is not for me to answer thereto," said Atli; "nor art thou a suitor in that case."

Gunnar said he would stand in that stead none-the-less. "Come, let us set on them, and make much of it, that Grettir is not nigh them now."

Then they ran at Atli, eight of them altogether, but Atli and his folk were six.

Atli went before his men, and drew the sword, Jokul's gift, which Grettir had given him.

Then said Thorgeir, "Many like ways have those who deem themselves good; high aloft did Grettir bear his short-sword last summer on the Ramfirth-neck."

Atli answered, "Yea, he is more wont to deal in great deeds than I."

Thereafter they fought; Gunnar set on Atli exceeding fiercely, and was of the maddest; and when they had fought awhile, Atli said,

"No fame there is in thus killing workmen each for the other; more seeming it is that we ourselves play together, for never have I fought with weapons till now."

Gunnar would not have it so, but Atli bade his house-carles look to the burdens; "But I will see what these will do herein."

Then he went forward so mightily that Gunnar and his folk shrunk back before him, and he slew two of the men of those brothers, and thereafter turned to meet Gunnar, and smote at him, so that the shield was cleft asunder almost below the handle, and the stroke fell on his leg below the knee, and then he smote at him again, and that was his bane.

Now is it to be told of Grim Thorhallson that he went against Thorgeir, and they strove together long, for each was a hardy man. Thorgeir saw the fall of his brother Gunnar, and was fain to draw off. Grim ran after him, and followed him till Thorgeir stumbled, and fell face foremost; then Grim smote at him with an axe betwixt the shoulders, so that it stood deep sunken therein.

Then they gave peace to three of their followers who were left; and thereafter they bound up their wounds, and laid the burdens on the horses, and then fared home, and made these man-slayings known.

Atli sat at home with many men through the winter. Thorbiorn Oxmain took these doings exceedingly ill, but could do naught therein because Atli was a man well befriended. Grim was with him through the winter, and Gamli, his brother-in-law; and there was Glum, son of Uspak, another kinsman-in-law of his, who at that time dwelt at Ere in Bitra. They had many men dwelling at Biarg, and great mirth was thereat through the winter.

CHAPTER XLIV. The Suit for the Slaying of the Sons of Thorir of the Pass

Thorbiorn Oxmain took on himself the suit for the slaying of the sons of Thorir of the Pass. He made ready a suit against Grim and Atli, but they set forth for their defence onset and attack, to make those brothers fall unatoned. The suit was brought to the Hunawater Thing, and men came thronging to both sides. Atli had good help because he was exceeding strong of kin.

Now the friends of both stood forth and talked of peace, and all said that Atli's ways were good, a peaceful man, but stout in danger none-the-less.

Now Thorbiorn deemed that by nought would his honour be served better than by taking the peace offered. Atli laid down before-hand that he would have neither district outlawry nor banishment.

Then were men chosen for the judges. Thorvald, son of Asgeir, on Atli's side, and on Thorbiorn's, Solvi the Proud, who was the son of Asbrand, the son of Thorbrand, the son of Harald Ring, who had settled all Waterness from the Foreland up to Bond-maids River on the west, but on the east all up to Cross-river, and there right across to Berg-ridge, and all on that side of the Bergs down to the sea: this Solvi was a man of great stateliness and a wise man, therefore Thorbiorn chose him to be judge on his behoof.

Now they set forth their judgment, that half-fines should be paid for the sons of Thorir, but half fell away because of the on-slaught and attack, and attempt on Atli's life, the slaying of Atli's house-carle, who was slain on Ramfirth-neck, and the slaying of those twain who fell with the sons of Thorir were set off one

against the other. Grim Thorhallson should leave dwelling in the district, but Atli alone should pay the money atonement.

This peace pleased Atli much, but Thorbiorn misliked it, but they parted appeased, as far as words went; howsoever it fell from Thorbiorn that their dealings would not be made an end of yet, if things went as he would.

But Atli rode home from the Thing, and thanked Thorvald well for his aid. Grim Thorhallson went south to Burgfirth, and dwelt at Gilsbank, and was a great bonder.

CHAPTER XLV. Of the Slaying of Atli Asmundson

There was a man with Thorbiorn Oxmain who was called Ali; he was a house-carle, a somewhat lazy and unruly man.

Thorbiorn bade him work better, or he would beat him. Ali said he had no list thereto, and was beyond measure worrying. Thorbiorn would not abide it, and drave him under him, and handled him hardly. Then Ali went off from his service, and fared over the Neck to Midfirth, and made no stay till he came to Biarg. Atli was at home, and asked whither he went. He said that he sought service.

"Art thou not Thorbiorn's workman?" said Atli.

"That did not go off so pleasantly," said Ali; "I was not there long, and evil I deemed it while I was there, and we parted, so that I deemed his song about my throat nowise sweet; and I will go to dwell there no more, whatso else may hap to me; and true it is that much unlike ye are in the luck ye have with servants, and now I would fain work with thee if I might have the choice."

Atli answered, "Enough I have of workmen, though I reach not out to Thorbiorn's hands for such men as he has hired, and me thinks there is no gain in thee, so go back to him."

Ali said, "Thither I go not of my own free-will."

And now he dwells there awhile; but one morning he went out to work with Atli's house-carles, and worked so that his hands were everywhere, and thus he went on till far into summer. Atli said nought to him, but bade give him meat, for he liked his working well.

Now Thorbiorn hears that Ali is at Biarg; then he rode to Biarg with two men, and called out Atli to talk with him. Atli went out and welcomed him.

Thorbiorn said, "Still wilt thou take up afresh ill-will against me, and trouble me, Atli. Why hast thou taken my workman? Wrongfully is this done."

Atli answered, "It is not proven to me that he is thy workman, nor will I withhold him from thee, if thou showest proofs thereof, yet am I loth to drag him out of my house."

"Thou must have thy will now," said Thorbiorn; "but I claim the man, and forbid him to work here; and I will come again another time, and I know not if we shall then part better friends than now."

Atli said, "I shall abide at home, and take what may come to hand."

Then Thorbiorn rode home; but when the workmen come home in the evening, Atli tells all the talk betwixt him and Thorbiorn, and bids Ali go his way, and said he should not abide there longer.

Ali answered, "True is the old saw, *over-praised and first to fail*. I deemed not that thou wouldst drive me away after I had toiled here all the summer enough to break my heart, and I hoped that thou wouldst stand up for me somehow; but this is the way of you, though ye look as if good might be hoped from you. I shall be beaten here before thine eyes if thou givest me not some defence or help."

Atli altered his mind at this talk of his, and had no heart now to drive him away from him.

Now the time wore, till men began hay-harvest, and one day, somewhat before midsummer, Thorbiorn Oxmain rode to Biarg, he was so attired that he had a helm on his head, and was girt with a sword, and had a spear in his hand. A barbed spear it was, and the barbs were broad.

It was wet abroad that day. Atli had sent his house-carles to the mowing, but some of them were north at Horn a-fishing. Atli was at home, and few other men.

Thorbiorn came there about high-noon; alone he was, and rode up to the outer door; the door was locked, and no men were abroad. Thorbiorn smote on the door, and then drew aback behind the houses, so that none might see him from the door. The home-folk heard that the door was knocked at, and a woman went out. Thorbiorn had an inkling of the woman, and would not let himself be seen, for he had a mind to do something else.

Now the woman went into the chamber, and Atli asked who was come there. She said, "I have seen nought stirring abroad." And even as they spake Thorbiorn let drive a great stroke on the door.

Then said Atli, "This one would see me, and he must have some errand with me, whatever may be the gain thereof to me."

Then he went forth and out of the door, and saw no one without. Exceeding wet it was, therefore he went not out, but laid a hand on either door-post, and so peered about him.

In that point of time Thorbiorn swung round before the door, and thrust the spear with both hands amidst of Atli, so that it pierced him through.

Then said Atli, when he got the thrust, "*Broad spears are about now*," says he, and fell forward over the threshold.

Then came out women who had been in the chamber, and saw that Atli was dead. By then was Thorbiorn on horseback, and he gave out the slaying as having been done by his hand, and thereafter rode home.

The goodwife Asdis sent for her men, and Atli's corpse was laid out, and he was buried beside his father. Great mourning folk made for his death, for he had been a wise man, and of many friends.

No weregild came for the slaying of Atli, nor did any claim atonement for him, because Grettir had the blood-suit to take up if he should come out; so these matters stood still for that summer. Thorbiorn was little thanked for that deed of his; but he sat at peace in his homestead.

CHAPTER XLVI. Grettir outlawed at the Thing at the Suit of Thorir of Garth

This summer, whereof the tale was telling e'en now, a ship came out to Goose-ere before the Thing. Then was the news told of Grettir's travels, and therewithal men spake of that house-burning; and at that story was Thorir of Garth mad wroth, and deemed that there whereas Grettir was he had to look for vengeance for his sons. He rode with many men and set forth at the Thing the case for the burning, but men deemed they knew nought to say therein, while there was none to answer.

Thorir said that he would have nought, but that Grettir should be made an outlaw throughout the land for such misdeeds.

Then answered Skapti the Lawman, "Surely an ill deed it is, if things are as is said; but a tale is half told if one man tells it, for most folk are readiest to bring their stories to the worse side when there are two ways of telling them; now, therefore, I shall not give my word that Grettir be made guilty for this that has been done."

Now Thorir was a man of might in his district and a great chief, and well befriended of many great men; and he pushed on matters so hard that nought could avail to acquit Grettir; and so this Thorir made Grettir an outlaw throughout all the land, and was ever thenceforth the heaviest of all his foes, as things would oft show.

Now he put a price on his head, as was wont to be done with other wood-folk, and thereafter rode home.

Many men got saying that this was done rather by the high hand than according to law; but so it stood as it was done; and now nought else happened to tell of till past midsummer.

CHAPTER XLVII. Grettir comes out to Iceland again

When summer was far spent came Grettir Asmundson out to Whiteriver in Burgfirth; folk went down to the ship from thereabout, and these tidings came all at once to Grettir; the first, that his father was dead, the second, that his brother was slain, the third, that he himself was made an outlaw throughout all the land. Then sang Grettir this stave:—

Heavy tidings thick and fast
 On the singer now are cast;
 My father dead, my brother dead,
 A price set upon my head;
 Yet, O grove of Hedin's maid,
 May these things one day be paid;
 Yea upon another morn
 Others may be more forlorn.

So men say that Grettir changed nowise at these tidings, but was even as merry as before.

Now he abode with the ship awhile, because he could get no horse to his mind. But there was a man called Svein, who dwelt at Bank up from Thingness, he was a good bonder and a merry man, and often sang such songs as were gamesome to hear; he had a mare black to behold, the swiftest of all horses, and her Svein called Saddle-fair.

Now Grettir went one night away from the wolds, but he would not that the chapmen should be ware of his ways; he got a black cape, and threw it over his clothes, and so was disguised; he went up past Thingness, and so up to Bank, and by then it was daylight. He saw a black horse in the homefield and went up to it, and laid bridle on it, leapt on the back of it, and rode up along Whiteriver, and below Bye up to Flokedale-river, and then up the tracks above Kalfness; the workmen at Bank got up now and told the bonder of the man who had got on his mare; he got up and laughed, and sang—

One that helm-fire well can wield
 Rode off from my well-fenced field,
 Helm-stalk stole away from me
 Saddle-fair, the swift to see;
 Certes, more great deeds this Frey
 Yet shall do in such-like way
 As this was done; I deem him then
 Most overbold and rash of men.

Then he took horse and rode after him; Grettir rode on till he came up to the homestead at Kropp; there he met a man called Hall, who said that he was going down to the ship at the Wolds; Grettir sang a stave—

In broad-peopled lands say thou
 That thou sawest even now
 Unto Kropp-farm's gate anigh,
 Saddle-fair and Elm-stalk high;
 That thou sawest stiff on steed
 (Get thee gone at greatest speed),
 One who loveth game and play
 Clad in cape of black to-day.

Then they part, and Hall went down the track and all the way down to Kalfness, before Svein met him; they greeted one another hastily, then sang Svein—

Sawest thou him who did me harm
 On my horse by yonder farm?
 Even such an one was he,
 Sluggish yet a thief to see;
 From the neighbours presently
 Doom of thief shall he abye
 And a blue skin shall he wear,
 If his back I come anear.

"That thou mayst yet do," said Hall, "I saw that man who said that he rode on Saddle-fair, and bade me tell it over the peopled lands and settlements; great of growth he was, and was clad in a black cape."

"He deems he has something to fall back on," said the bonder, "but I shall ride after him and find out who he is."

Now Grettir came to Deildar-Tongue, and there was a woman without the door; Grettir went up to talk to her, and sang this stave—

Say to guard of deep-sea's flame
 That here worm-land's haunter came;
 Well-born goddess of red gold,
 Thus let gamesome rhyme be told.
 'Giver forth of Odin's mead
 Of thy black mare have I need;
 For to Gilsbank will I ride,
 Meed of my rash words to bide.'

The woman learned this song, and thereafter Grettir rode on his way; Svein came there a little after, and she was not yet gone in, and as he came he sang this—

What foreteller of spear-shower
 E'en within this nigh-passed hour,
 Swift through the rough weather rode
 Past the gate of this abode?
 He, the hound-eyed reckless one,
 By all good deeds left alone,
 Surely long upon this day
 From my hands will flee away.

Then she told him what she had been bidden to; he thought over the ditty, and said, "It is not unlike that he will be no man to play with; nathless, I will find him out."

Now he rode along the peopled lands, and each man ever saw the other's riding; and the weather was both squally and wet.

Grettir came to Gilsbank that day, and when Grim Thorhallson knew thereof, he welcomed him with great joy, and bade him abide with him. This Grettir agreed to; then he let loose Saddle-fair, and told Grim how she had been come by. Therewith came Svein, and leapt from his horse, and saw his own mare, and sang this withal—

Who rode on my mare away?
 What is that which thou wilt pay?
 Who a greater theft has seen?
 What does the cowl-covered mean?

Grettir by then had doft his wet clothes, and he heard the stave, and answered—

I did ride thy mare to Grim
 (Thou art feeble weighed with him),
 Little will I pay to thee,
 Yet good fellows let us be.

"Well, so be it then," said the farmer, "and the ride is well paid for."

Then each sang his own songs, and Grettir said he had no fault to find, though he failed to hold his own; the bonder was there that night, and the twain of them together, and great game they made of this: and they called all this Saddle-fair's lays. Next morning the bonder rode home, and he and Grettir parted good friends.

Now Grim told Grettir of many things from the north and Midfirth, that had befallen while he was abroad, and this withal, that Atli was unatoned, and how that Thorbiorn Oxmain waxed so great, and was so high-handed, that it was not sure that goodwife Asdis might abide at Biarg if matters still went so.

Grettir abode but few nights with Grim, for he was fain that no news should go before him north over the Heaths. Grim bade him come thither if he should have any need of safeguard.

"Yet shall I shun being made guilty in law for the harbouring of thee."

Grettir said he did well. "But it is more like that later on I may need thy good deed more."

Now Grettir rode north over Twodaysway, and so to Biarg, and came there in the dead of night, when all folk were asleep save his mother. He went in by the back of the house and through a door that was there, for the ways of the house were well known to him, and came to the hall, and got to his mother's bed, and groped about before him.

She asked who was there, and Grettir told her; then she sat up and kissed him, and sighed withal, heavily, and spake, "Be welcome; son," she said, "but my joyance in my sons is slipping from me; for he is slain who was of most avail, and thou art made an outlaw and a guilty man, and the third is so young; that he may do nought for me."

"An old saw it is," said Grettir, "*Even so shall bale be bettered, by biding greater bale*; but there are more things to be thought of by men than money atonements alone, and most like it is that Atli will be avenged; but as to things that may fall to me, many must even take their lot at my hand in dealing with me, and like it as they may."

She said that was not unlike. And now Grettir was there a while with the knowledge of few folk; and he had news of the doings of the folk of the country-side; and men knew not that Grettir was come into Midfirth: but he heard that Thorbiorn Oxmain was at home with few men; and that was after the homefield hay-harvest.

CHAPTER XLVIII. The Slaying of Thorbiorn Oxmain

On a fair day Grettir rode west over the Necks to Thorodstead, and came there about noon, and knocked at the door; women came out and welcomed him, but knew him not; he asked for Thorbiorn, but they said he was gone to the meadow to bind hay, and with him his son of sixteen winters, who was called Arnor; for Thorbiorn was a very busy man, and well-nigh never idle.

So when Grettir knew this, he bade them well betide, and went his way on the road toward Reeks, there a marsh stretches down from the hill-side, and on it was much grass to mow, and much hay had Thorbiorn made there, and now it was fully dry, and he was minded to bind it up for home, he and the lad with him, but a woman did the raking.

Now Grettir rode from below up into the field, but the father and son were higher up, and had bound one load, and were now at another; Thorbiorn had set his shield and sword against the load, and the lad had a hand-axe beside him.

Now Thorbiorn saw a man coming, and said to the lad, "Yonder is a man riding toward us, let us leave binding the hay, and know what he will with us."

So did they, and Grettir leapt off his horse; he had a helm on his head, and was girt with the short-sword, and bore a great spear in his hand, a spear without barbs, and the socket inlaid with silver. Now he sat down and knocked out the socket-nail, because he would not that Thorbiorn should cast the spear back.

Then said Thorbiorn, "He is a big man, and no man in field know I, if that is not Grettir Asmundson, and he must needs think he has enough against us; so let us meet him sharply, and let him see no signs of failing in us. We shall deal cunningly; for I will go against him in front, and take thou heed how matters go betwixt us, for I will trust myself against any man if I have one alone to meet; but do thou go behind him, and drive the axe at him with both hands atwixt his shoulders; thou needest not fear that he will do thee hurt, as his back will be turned to thee."

Neither Thorbiorn nor his son had a helm.

Now Grettir got into the mead, and when he came within spear-throw of them, he cast his spear at Thorbiorn, but the head was looser on the shaft than he deemed it would be, and it swerved in its flight, and fell down from the shaft to the earth: then Thorbiorn took his shield, and put it before him, but drew his sword and went against Grettir when he knew him; then Grettir drew his short-sword, and turned about somewhat, so that he saw how the lad stood at his back, wherefore he kept himself free to move here or there, till he saw that the lad was come within reach of him, and therewith he raised the short-sword high aloft, and sent it back against Arnor's head so mightily that the skull was shattered, and that was his bane. Then Thorbiorn ran against Grettir and smote at him, but he thrust forth his buckler with his left hand, and put the blow from him, and smote with the short-sword withal, and cleft the shield of Thorbiorn, and the short-sword smote so hard into his head that it went even unto the brain, and he fell dead to earth beneath that stroke, nor did Grettir give him any other wound.

Then he sought for his spear-head, and found it not; so he went to his horse and rode out to Reeks, and there told of the slayings. Withal the woman who was in the meadow saw the slayings, and ran home full of fear, and said that Thorbiorn was slain, and his son both; this took those of the house utterly unawares, for they knew nought of Grettir's travelling. So were men sent for to the next homestead, and soon came many folk, and brought the bodies to church. Thorod Drapa-Stump took up the blood-suit for these slayings and had folk a-field forthwith.

But Grettir rode home to Biarg, and found his mother, and told her what had happened; and she was glad thereat, and said that now he got to be like unto the Waterdale kin. "Yet will this be the root and stem of thine outlawry, and I know for sooth that thou mayest not abide here long because of the kin of Thorbiorn; but now may they know that thou mayest be angered."

Grettir sang this stave thereupon—

Giant's friend fell dead to earth
On the grass of Wetherfirth,

No fierce fighting would avail,
Oxmain in the Odin's gale.
So, and in no other wise,
Has been paid a fitting price
For that Atli, who of yore,
Lay dead-slain anigh his door.

Goodwife Asdis said that was true; "But I know not what rede thou art minded to take?"

Grettir said that he would seek help of his friends and kin in the west; "But on thee shall no trouble fall for my sake," said he.

So he made ready to go, and mother and son parted in love; but first he went to Meals in Ramfirth, and told Gamli his brother-in-law all, even as it had happened, concerning the slaying of Thorbiorn.

Gamli told him he must needs depart from Ramfirth while Thorbiorn's kin had their folk about; "But our aid in the suit for Atli's slaying we shall yield thee as we may."

So thereafter Grettir rode west over Laxdale-heath, and stayed not till he came to Liarskogar to Thorstein Kuggson, where he dwelt long that autumn.

CHAPTER XLIX. The gathering to avenge Thorbiorn Oxmain

Thorod Drapa-Stump sought tidings of this who might have slain Thorbiorn and his son, and when he came to Reeks, it was told him that Grettir had been there and given out the slayings as from his hand. Now, Thorod deemed he saw how things had come to pass; so he went to Biarg, and there found many folk, but he asked if Grettir were there.

The goodwife said he had ridden away, and that she would not slip him into hiding-places if he were there.

"Now ye will be well pleased that matters have so been wrought; nor was the slaying of Atli over-avenged, though this was paid for it. Ye asked not then what grief of heart I had; and now, too, it is well that things are even so."

Therewith they rode home, and found it not easy to do aught therein.

Now that spear-head which Grettir lost was not found till within the memory of men living now; it was found in the latter days of Sturla Thordson the lawman, and in that marsh where Thorbiorn fell, which is now called Spear-mead; and that sign men have to show that Thorbiorn was slain there, though in some places it is said that he was slain on Midfit.

Thorod and his kin heard that Grettir abode at Liarskogar; then they gathered men, and were minded to go thither; but when Gamli of Meals was ware thereof, he made Thorstein and Grettir sure of the farings of the Ramfirthers; and when Thorstein knew it, he sent Grettir in to Tongue to Snorri Godi, for then there was no strife between them, and Thorstein gave that counsel to Grettir that he should pray Snorri the Godi for his watch and ward; but if he would not grant it, he made Grettir go west to Reek-knolls to Thorgils Arisen, "and he will take thee to him through this winter, and keep within the Westfirths till these matters are settled."

Grettir said he would take good heed to his counsels; then he rode into Tongue, and found Snorri the Godi, and talked with him, and prayed him to take him in.

Snorri answered, "I grow an old man now, and loth am I to harbour outlawed men if no need drive me thereto. What has come to pass that the elder put thee off from him?"

Grettir said that Thorstein had often done well to him; "But more shall I need than him alone, if things are to go well."

Said Snorri, "My good word I shall put in for thee if that may avail thee aught, but in some other place than with me must thou seek a dwelling."

With these words they parted, and Grettir turned west to Reekness; the Ramfirthers with their band got as far as Samstead, and there they heard that Grettir had departed from Liarskogar, and thereat they went back home.

CHAPTER L. Grettir and the Foster-brothers at Reek-knolls

Now Grettir came to Reek-knolls about winter-nights, and prayed Thorgils for winter abode; Thorgils said, that for him as for other

free men meat was ready; "but the fare of guests here is nowise choice." Grettir said he was not nice about that.

"There is yet another thing here for thy trouble," said Thorgils: "Men are minded to harbour here, who are deemed somewhat hard to keep quiet, even as those foster-brothers, Thorgeir and Thormod; I wot not how meet it may be for you to be together; but their dwelling shall ever be here if they will it so: now mayst thou abide here if thou wilt, but I will not have it that either of you make strife with the other."

Grettir said he would not be the first to raise strife with any man, and so much the less as the bonder's will was such.

A little after came those foster-brothers home; things went not merrily betwixt Thorgeir and Grettir, but Thormod bore himself well. Goodman Thorgils said to the foster-brothers even as he had said to Grettir; and of such worth they held him, that neither cast an untoward word at the other although their minds went nowise the same way: and so wore the early winter.

Now men say that Thorgils owned those isles, which are called Olaf's-isles, and lie out in the firth a sea-mile and a half off Reekness; there had bonder Thorgils a good ox that he might not fetch home in the autumn; and he was ever saying that he would fain have him against Yule. Now, one day those foster-brothers got ready to seek the ox, if a third man could be gotten to their aid: Grettir offered to go with them, and they were well pleased thereat; they went, the three of them, in a ten-oared boat: the weather was cold, and the wind shifting from the north, and the craft lay up on Whaleshead-holm.

Now they sail out, and somewhat the wind got up, but they came to the isle and got hold of the ox; then asked Grettir which they would do, bear the ox aboard or keep hold of the craft, because the surf at the isle was great; then they bade him hold the boat; so he stood amidships on that side which looked from shore, and the sea took him up to the shoulder-blades, yet he held her so that she moved nowise: but Thorgeir took the ox behind and Thormod before, and so hove it down to the boat; then they sat down to row, and Thormod rowed in the bows, Thorgeir amidships, and Grettir aft, and therewith they made out into the open bay; but when they came off Goat-rock, a squall caught them, then said Thorgeir, "The stern is fain to lag behind."

Then said Grettir, "The stern will not be left if the rowing afore be good."

Thereat Thorgeir fell to rowing so hard that both the tholes were broken: then said he, "Row on, Grettir, while I mend the thole-pins."

Then Grettir pulled mightily while Thorgeir did his mending, but when Thorgeir took to rowing again, the oars had got so worn that Grettir shook them asunder on the gunwale.

"Better," quoth Thormod, "to row less and break nought."

Then Grettir caught up two unshapen oar beams that lay in the boat and bored large holes in the gunwales, and rowed withal so mightily that every beam creaked, but whereas the craft was good, and the men somewhat of the brisker sort, they reached Whaleshead-holm.

Then Grettir asked whether they would rather go home with the ox or haul up the boat; they chose to haul up the boat, and hauled it up with all the sea that was in it, and all the ice, for it was much covered with icicles: but Grettir led home the ox, and exceeding stiff in tow he was, and very fat, and he grew very weary, and when they came up below Titling-stead could go no more.

The foster-brothers went up to the house, for neither would help the other in his allotted work; Thorgils asked after Grettir, but they told him where they had parted; then he sent men to meet him, and when they came down to Cave-knolls they saw how there came towards them a man with a neat on his back, and lo, there was Grettir come, bearing the ox: then all men wondered at his great might.

Now Thorgeir got very envious of Grettir's strength, and one day somewhat after Yule, Grettir went alone to bathe; Thorgeir knew thereof, and said to Thormod, "Let us go on now, and try how Grettir will start if I set on him as he comes from his bathing."

"That is not my mind," said Thormod, "and no good wilt thou get from him."

"I will go though," says Thorgeir; and therewith he went down to the slope, and bore aloft an axe.

By then was Grettir walking up from the bath, and when they met, Thorgeir said; "Is it true, Grettir," says he, "that thou hast said so much as that thou wouldst never run before one man?"

"That I know not for sure," said Grettir, "yet but a little way have I run before thee."

Thorgeir raised aloft the axe, but therewith Grettir ran in under Thorgeir and gave him an exceeding great fall: then said Thorgeir to Thormod, "Wilt thou stand by and see this fiend drive me down under him?"

Thormod caught hold of Grettir's feet, and was minded to pull him from off Thorgeir, but could do nought thereat: he was girt with a short-sword and was going to draw it, when Goodman Thorgils came up and bade them be quiet and have nought to do with Grettir.

So did they and turned it all to game, and no more is told of their dealings; and men thought Thorgils had great luck in that he kept such reckless men in good peace.

But when spring came they all went away; Grettir went round to Codfirth, and he was asked, how he liked the fare of the winter abode at Reek-knolls; he answered, "There have I ever been as fain as might be of my meals when I got at them."

Thereafter he went west over the heaths.

CHAPTER LI. Of the suit for the Slaying of Thorbiorn Oxmain, and how Thorir of Garth would not that Grettir should be made sackless.

Thorgils Arison rode to the Thing with many men; and thither came all the great men of the land. Now Thorgils and Skapti the Lawman soon met, and fell to talking.

Then said Skapti, "Is it true, Thorgils, that thou hast harboured those three men through the winter who are deemed to be the wildest of all men; yea, and all of them outlawed withal, and yet hast kept them so quiet, that no one of them has done hurt to the other?"

Thorgils said it was true enough.

Skapti said that great might over men it showed forth in him; "But how goes it, thinkest thou, with the temper of each of them; and which of them thinkest thou the bravest man?"

Thorgils said, "I deem they are all of them full stout of heart; but two of them I deem know what fear is, and yet in unlike ways; for Thormod is a great believer and fears God much; but Grettir is so fearsome in the dark, that he dares go nowhither after dusk has set in, if he may do after his own mind. But my kinsman Thorgeir I deem knows not how to fear."

"Yea, so it is with their minds as thou sayest," said Skapti; and with that they left talking.

Now, at this Althing Thorod Drapa-Stump brought forward a suit for the slaying of Thorbiorn Oxmain, which he had not brought to a hearing at the Hunawater Thing, because of the kin of Atli, and he deemed that here his case would be less like to be thrown over. The kinsmen of Atli sought counsel of Skapti about the case; and he said he saw in it a lawful defence, so that full atonement would be forthcoming therefor. Then were these matters laid unto unpiqued, and most men were minded that the slayings of Atli and Thorbiorn should be set one against the other.

But when Skapti knew that, he went to the judges, and asked whence they had that? They said that they deemed the slain men were bonders of equal worth.

Then Skapti asked, which was the first, the outlawry of Grettir or the slaying of Atli? So, when that was reckoned up, there was a week's space betwixt Grettir's outlawry at the Althing and the slaying of Atli, which befell just after it.

Then said Skapti, "Thereof my mind misgave me, that ye had made an oversight in setting on foot the suit in that ye made him a suitor, who was outlawed already, and could neither defend nor prosecute his own case. Now I say that Grettir has nought to do with the case of the slaying, but let him take up the blood-suit, who is nighest of kin by law."

Then said Thorod Drapa-Stump, "And who shall answer for the slaying of Thorbiorn my brother?"

"See ye to that for yourselves," said Skapti; "but the kin of Grettir will never pour out fee for him or his works, if no peace is to be bought for him."

Now when Thorvald Asgeirson was aware that Grettir was set aside from following the blood-suit, he and his sought concerning who was the next of kin; and that turned out to be Skeggi, son of Gamli of Meals, and Uspak, son of Glum of Ere in Bitra; they were both of them exceeding zealous and pushing.

Now must Thorod give atonement for Atli's slaying, and two hundreds in silver he had to pay.

Then spake Snorri the Godi, "Will ye now, Ramfirthers," says he, "that this money-fine should fall away, and that Grettir be made sackless withal, for in my mind it is that as a guilty man he will be sorely felt?"

Grettir's kin took up his word well, and said that they heeded the fee nought if he might have peace and freedom. Thorod said that he saw Grettir's lot would be full of heavy trouble, and made as if he would take the offer, for his part. Then Snorri bade them first know if Thorir of Garth would give his leave to Grettir being made free; but when Thorir heard thereof he turned away exceeding wroth, and said that Grettir should never either get out of his outlawry or be brought out of it: "And the more to bring that about," said he, "a greater price shall be put on his head than on the head of any outlaw or wood-man yet."

So, when he took the thing so ill, the freeing of Grettir came to nought, and Gamli and his fellows took the money to them, and kept it in their ward; but Thorod Drapa-Stump had no atonement for his brother Thorbiorn.

Now Thorir and Thorod set each of them on Grettir's head three marks of silver, and that folk deemed a new thing, for never had any greater price been laid down to such an end before than three marks in all.

Snorri said it was unwisely done to make a sport of keeping a man in outlawry who might work so much ill, and that many a man would have to pay for it.

But now men part and ride home from the Thing.

CHAPTER LII. How Grettir was taken by the Icefirth Carles

When Grettir came over Codfirth-heath down into Longdale, he swept up unsparingly the goods of the petty bonders, and had of every man what he would; from some he took weapons, from some clothes; and these folk gave up in very unlike ways; but as soon as he was gone, all said they gave them unwillingly.

In those days dwelt in Waterfirth Vermund the Slender, the brother of Slaying-Styr; he had to wife Thorbiorg, the daughter of Olaf Peacock, son of Hoskuld. She was called Thorbiorg the Big; but at the time that Grettir was in Longdale had Vermund ridden to the Thing.

Now Grettir went over the neck to Bathstead. There dwelt a man called Helgi, who was the biggest of bonders thereabout: from there had Grettir a good horse, which the bonder owned, and thence he went to Giorvidale, where farmed a man named Thorkel. He was well stored with victuals, yet a mannikin withal: therefrom took Grettir what he would, nor durst Thorkel blame him or withhold aught from him.

Thence went Grettir to Ere, and out along the side of the firth, and had from every farm victuals and clothes, and dealt hardly with many; so that most men deemed him a heavy trouble to live under.

Now he fared fearlessly withal, and took no keep of himself, and so went on till he came to Waterfirth-dale, and went to the mountain-dairy, and there he dwelt a many nights, and lay in the woods there, and took no heed to himself; but when the herdsman knew that, they went to the farm, and said that to that stead was a fiend come whom they deemed nowise easy to deal with; then the farmers gathered together, and were thirty men in all: they lurked in the wood, so that Grettir was unaware of them, and let a shepherd spy on Grettir till they might get at him, yet they wotted not clearly who the man was.

Now so it befell that on a day as Grettir lay sleeping, the bonders came upon him, and when they saw him they took counsel how they should take him at the least cost of life, and settled so that ten men should leap on him, while some laid bonds on his feet; and this they did, and threw themselves on him, but Grettir broke forth so mightily that they fell from off him, and he got to his knees, yet thereby they might cast the bonds over him, and round about his feet; then Grettir spurned two of them so hard about the ears that they lay stunned on the earth. Now one after the other rushed at him, and he struggled hard and long, yet had they might to overcome him at the last, and so bound him.

Thereafter they talked over what they should do with him, and they bade Helgi of Bathstead take him and keep him in ward till Vermund came home from the Thing. He answered—

"Other things I deem more helpful to me than to let my house-carles sit over him, for my lands are hard to work, nor shall he ever come across me."

Then they bade Thorkel of Giorvidale take and keep him, and said that he was a man who had enow.

But Thorkel spake against it, and said that for nought would he do that: "Whereas I live alone in my house with my Carline, far from other men; nor shall ye lay that box on me," said he.

"Then, Thoralf of Ere," said they, "do thou take Grettir and do well to him till after the Thing; or else bring him on to the next farm, and be answerable that he get not loose, but deliver him bound as now thou hast him."

He answers, "Nay, I will not take Grettir, for I have neither victuals nor money to keep him withal, nor has he been taken on my land, and I deem it more trouble than honour to take him, or to have aught to do with him, nor shall he ever come into my house."

Thereafter they tried it with every bonder, but one and all spake against it; and after this talk have merry men made that lay which is high Grettir's-faring, and added many words of good game thereto for the sport of men.

So when they had talked it over long, they said, with one assent, that they would not make ill hap of their good-hap; so they went about and straightway reared up a gallows there in the wood, with the mind to hang Grettir, and made great clatter thereover.

Even therewith they see six folk riding down below in the dale, and one in coloured clothes, and they guessed that there would goodwife Thorbiorg be going from Waterfirth; and so it was, and she was going to the mountain-dairy. Now she was a very stirring woman, and exceeding wise; she had the ruling of the neighbourhood, and settled all matters, when Vermund was from home. Now she turned to where the men were gathered, and was helped off her horse, and the bonders gave her good welcome.

Then said she, "What have ye here? or who is the big-necked one who sits in bonds yonder?"

Grettir named himself, and greeted her.

She spake again, "What drove thee to this, Grettir," says she, "that thou must needs do riotously among my Thing-men?"

"I may not look to everything; I must needs be somewhere," said he.

"Great ill luck it is," says she, "that these milksops should take thee in such wise that none should fall before thee. What are ye minded to do with him?"

The bonders told her that they were going to tie him up to the gallows for his lawlessness.

She answers, "Maybe Grettir is guilty enough therefor, but it is too great a deed for you, Icefirthers, to take his life, for he is a famous man, and of mighty kin, albeit he is no lucky man; but now what wilt thou do for thy life, Grettir, if I give it thee?"

He answered, "What sayest thou thereto?"

She said, "Thou shalt make oath to work no evil riots here in Icefirth, and take no revenge on whomsoever has been at the taking of thee."

Grettir said that she should have her will, and so he was loosed; and he says of himself that at that time of all times did he most rule his temper, when he smote them not as they made themselves great before him.

Now Thorbiorg bade him go home with her, and gave him a horse for his riding; so he went to Waterfirth and abode there till

Vermund came home, and the housewife did well to him, and for this deed was she much renowned far and wide in the district.

But Vermund took this ill at his coming home, and asked what made Grettir there? Then Thorbiorg told him how all had gone betwixt Grettir and the Icefirthers.

"What reward was due to him," said Vermund, "that thou gavest him his life?"

"Many grounds there were thereto," said Thorbiorg; "and this, first of all, that thou wilt be deemed a greater chief than before in that thou hast a wife who has dared to do such a deed; and then withal surely would Hrefna his kinswoman say that I should not let men slay him; and, thirdly, he is a man of the greatest prowess in many wise."

"A wise wife thou art withal," said Vermund, "and have thou thanks therefor."

Then he said to Grettir, "Stout as thou art, but little was to be paid for thee, when thou must needs be taken of mannikins; but so ever it fares with men riotous."

Then Grettir sang this stave—

Ill luck-to me
That I should be
On sea-roof-firth
Borne unto earth;
Ill luck enow
To lie alow,
This head of mine
Griped fast by swine.

"What were they minded to do to thee," said Vermund, "when they took thee there?"

Quoth Grettir—

There many men
Bade give me then
E'en Sigar's meed
For lovesome deed;
Till found me there
That willow fair,
Whose leaves are praise,
Her stems good days.

Vermund asked, "Would they have hanged thee then, if they alone had had to meddle with matters?"

Said Grettir—

Yea, to the snare
That dangled there
My head must I
Soon bring anigh;
But Thorbiorg came
The brightest dame,
And from that need
The singer freed.

Then said Vermund, "Did she bid thee to her?"

Grettir answered—

Sif's lord's good aid,
My saviour, bade
To take my way
With her that day;
So did it fall;
And therewithal
A horse she gave;
Good peace I have.

"Mighty will thy life be and troublous," said Vermund; "but now thou hast learned to beware of thy foes; but I have no will to harbour thee, and gain therefor the ill-will of many rich men; but best is it for thee to seek thy kinsmen, though few men will be willing to take thee in if they may do aught else; nor to most men art thou an easy fellow withal."

Now Grettir was in Waterfirth a certain space, and then fared thence to the Westfirths, and sought shelter of many great men; but something ever came to pass whereby none of them would harbour him.

CHAPTER LIII. Grettir with Thorstein Kuggson

When the autumn was somewhat spent, Grettir turned back by the south, and made no stay till he came to Liarskogar to Thorstein Kuggson, his kinsman, and there had he good welcome, for

Thorstein bade him abide there through the winter, and that bidding he agreed to. Thorstein was a busy man and a good smith, and kept men close to their work; but Grettir had little mind to work, wherefore their tempers went but little together.

Thorstein had let make a church at his homestead; and a bridge he had made out from his house, wrought with great craft; for in the outside bridge, under the beams that held it up, were rings wrought all about, and din-bells, so that one might hear over to Scarf-stead, half a sea-mile off, if aught went over the bridge, because of the shaking of the rings. Thorstein had much to do over this work, for he was a great worker of iron; but Grettir went fiercely at the iron-smiting, yet was in many minds thereover; but he was quiet through the winter, so that nought befell worthy telling. But when the Ramfirthers knew that Grettir was with Thorstein, they had their band afoot as soon as spring came. So when Thorstein knew that, he bade Grettir seek some other shelter than his house, "For I see thou wilt not work, and men who will do nought are not meet men for me."

"Where wouldst thou have me go, then?" said Grettir.

Thorstein bade him fare to the south country, and find his kin, "But come to me if they avail thee not."

Now so Grettir wrought that he went south to Burgfirth, to Grim Thorhallson, and dwelt there till over the Thing. Then Grim sent him on to Skapti the Lawman at Hjalli, and he went south by the lower heaths and stayed not till he came to Thorhall, son of Asgrim, son of Ellida-grim, and went little in the peopled lands. Thorhall knew Grettir because of his father and mother, and, indeed, by then was the name of Grettir well renowned through all the land because of his great deeds.

Thorhall was a wise man, and he did well to Grettir, but would not let him abide there long.

CHAPTER LIV. Grettir meets Hallmund on the Keel

Now Grettir fared from Tongue up to Hawkdale, and thence north upon the Keel, and kept about there long that summer; nor was there trust of him that he would not take men's goods from them, as they went from or to the north over the Keel, because he was hard put to it to get wares.

Now on a day, when as Grettir would keep about the north at Doveness-path, he saw a man riding from the north over the Keel; he was huge to behold on horseback, and had a good horse, and an embossed bridle well wrought; another horse he had in tow and bags thereon; this man had withal a slouched hat on his head, nor could his face be clearly seen.

Now Grettir looked hard at the horse and the goods thereon, and went to meet the man, and greeting him asked his name, but he said he was called Air. "I wot well what thou art called," said he, "for thou shalt be Grettir the Strong, the son of Asmund. Whither art thou bound?"

"As to the place I have not named it yet," said Grettir; "but as to my errand, it is to know if thou wilt lay down some of the goods thou farest with."

Said Air, "Why should I give thee mine own, or what wilt thou give me therefor?"

Grettir answers, "Hast thou not heard that I take, and give no money again? and yet it seems to most men that I get what I will."

Said Air, "Give such choice as this to those who deem it good, but not thus will I give up what I have; let each of us go his own way."

And therewithal he rode forth past Grettir and spurred his horse.

"Nay, we part not so hastily," said Grettir, and laid hold of the reins of Air's horse in front of his hands, and held on with both hands.

Said Air, "Go thy ways, nought thou hast of me if I may hold mine own."

"That will now be proven," said Grettir.

Now Air stretched his hands down the head-gear and laid hold of the reins betwixt Grettir's hands and the snaffle-rings and dragged at them so hard that Grettir's hands were drawn down along the reins, till Air dragged all the bridle from him.

Grettir looked into the hollow of his hands, and saw that this man must have strength in claws rather than not, and he looked after him, and said, "Whither art thou minded to fare?"

Air answered and sang—

To the Kettle's side
Now will I ride,
Where the waters fall
From the great ice-wall;
If thou hast mind
There mayest thou find
With little stone
Fist's land alone.

Grettir said, "It is of no avail to seek after thine abode if thou tellest of it no clearer than this."

Then Air spake and sang—

I would not hide
Where I abide,
If thou art fain
To see me again;
From that lone weald,
Over Burgfirth field,
That ye men name
Balljökul, I came.

Thereat they parted, and Grettir sees that he has no strength against this man; and therewithal he sang a stave—

Too far on this luckless day,
Atli, good at weapon-play,
Brisk Illugi were from me;
Such-like oft I shall not be
As I was, when I must stand
With the reins drawn through my hand
By the unflinching losel Air.
Maids weep when they know I fear.

Thereafter Grettir went to the south from the Keel; and rode to Hjalli and found Skapti, and prayed for watch and ward from him.

Skapti said, "It is told me that thou farest somewhat lawlessly, and layest hand on other men's goods; and this beseems thee ill, great of kin as thou art. Now all would make a better tale, if thou didst not rob and reive; but whereas I have to bear the name of lawman in the land, folk would not abide that I should take outlawed men to me, and break the laws thereby. I will that thou seek some place wherein thou wilt not have need to take men's goods from them."

Grettir said he would do even so, yet withal that he might scarcely be alone because he so feared the dark.

Skapti said that of that one thing then, which he deemed the best, he might not avail himself; "But put not such trust in any as to fare as thou didst in the Westfirths; it has been many a man's bane that he has been too trustful."

Grettir thanked him for his wholesome redes, and so turned back to Burgfirth in the autumn, and found Grim Thorhallson, his friend, and told him of Skapti's counsels; so Grim bade him fare north to Fishwater lakes on Ernewaterheath; and thus did he.

CHAPTER LV. Of Grettir on Ernewaterheath, and his dealings with Grim there

Grettir went up to Ernewaterheath and made there a hut for himself (whereof are yet signs left) and dwelt there, for now was he fain to do anything rather than rob and reive; he got him nets and a boat and caught fish for his food; exceeding dreary he deemed it in the mountains, because he was so fearsome of the dark.

But when other outlaws heard this, that Grettir was come down there, many of them had a mind to see him, because they thought there was much avail of him. There was a man called Grim, a Northlander, who was an outlaw; with him the Northlanders made a bargain that he should slay Grettir, and promised him freedom and gifts of money, if he should bring it to pass; so he went to meet Grettir, and prayed him to take him in.

Grettir answers, "I see not how thou art the more holpen for being with me, and troublous to heed are ye wood-folk; but ill I deem it to be alone, if other choice there were; but I will that such an one only be with me as shall do whatso work may befall."

Grim said he was of no other mind, and prayed hard that he might dwell there; then Grettir let himself be talked round, and

took him in; and he was there on into the winter, and watched Grettir, but deemed it no little matter to set on him. Grettir misdoubted him, and had his weapons by his side night and day, nor durst Grim attack him while he was awake.

But one morning whenas Grim came in from fishing, he went into the hut and stamped with his foot, and would know whether Grettir slept, but he started in nowise, but lay still; and the short-sword hung up over Grettir's head.

Now Grim thought that no better chance would happen, so he made a great noise, that Grettir might chide him, therefore, if he were awake, but that befell not. Now he thought that Grettir must surely be asleep, so he went stealthily up to the bed and reached out for the short-sword, and took it down, and unsheathed it. But even therewith Grettir sprang up on to the floor, and caught the short-sword just as the other raised it aloft, and laid the other hand on Grim betwixt the shoulders, and cast him down with such a fall, that he was well-nigh stunned; "Ah, such hast thou shown thyself," said he, "though thou wouldest give me good hope of thee." Then he had a true story from him, and thereafter slew him.

And now Grettir deemed he saw what it was to take in wood-folk, and so the winter wore; and nothing Grettir thought to be of more trouble than his dread of the dark.

CHAPTER LVI. Of Grettir and Thorir Redbeard

Now Thorir of Garth heard where Grettir had set himself down, and was fain to set afoot some plot whereby he might be slain. There was a man called Thorir Redbeard; he was the biggest of men, and a great man-slayer, and therefore was he made outlaw throughout the land. Thorir of Garth sent word to him, and when they met he bade him go on an errand of his, and slay Grettir the Strong. Redbeard said that was no easy task, and that Grettir was a wise man and a wary.

Thorir bade him make up his mind to this; "A manly task it is for so brisk a fellow as thou; but I shall bring thee out of thine outlawry, and therewithal give thee money enough."

So by that counsel Redbeard abode, and Thorir told him how he should go about the winning of Grettir. So thereafter he went round the land by the east, for thus he deemed his faring would be the less misdoubted; so he came to Ernewaterheath when Grettir had been there a winter. But when he met Grettir, he prayed for winter dwelling at his hands.

Grettir answered, "I cannot suffer you often to play the like play with me that he did who came here last autumn, who bepraised me cunningly, and when he had been here a little while lay in wait for my life; now, therefore, I have no mind to run the risk any more of the taking in of wood-folk."

Thorir answered, "My mind goes fully with thine in that thou deemest ill of outlawed men: and thou wilt have heard tell of me as of a man-slayer and a misdoer, but not as of a doer of such foul deeds as to betray my master. Now, *ill it is ill to be*, for many deem others to do after their own ways; nor should I have been minded to come hither, if I might have had a choice of better things; withal I deem we shall not easily be won while we stand together; thou mightest risk trying at first how thou likest me, and let me go my ways whenso thou markest ill faith in me."

Grettir answered, "Once more then will I risk it, even with thee; but wot thou well, that if I misdoubt me of thee, that will be thy bane."

Thorir bade him do even so, and thereafter Grettir received him, and found this, that he must have the strength of twain, what work soever he took in hand: he was ready for anything that Grettir might set him to, and Grettir need turn to nothing, nor had he found his life so good since he had been outlawed, yet was he ever so wary of himself that Thorir never got a chance against him.

Thorir Redbeard was with Grettir on the heath for two winters, and now he began to loathe his life on the heath, and falls to thinking what deed he shall do that Grettir will not see through; so one night in spring a great storm arose while they were asleep; Grettir awoke therewith, and asked where was their boat. Thorir sprang up, and ran down to the boat, and brake it all to pieces, and threw the broken pieces about here and there, so that it seemed as

though the storm had driven them along. Then he went into the hut, and called out aloud,

"Good things have not befallen us, my friend," said he; "for our boat is all broken to pieces, and the nets lie a long way out in the water."

"Go and bring them in then," said Grettir, "for methinks it is with thy goodwill that the boat is broken."

Thorir answered, "Among manly deeds swimming is the least handy to me, but most other deeds, I think, I may do against men who are not marvellous; thou mayest wot well enough that I was minded that thou shouldst not have to work while I abode here, and this I would not bid if it were in me to do it."

Then Grettir arose and took his weapons, and went to the water-side. Now the land was so wrought there that a ness ran into the water, and a great creek was on the other side, and the water was deep right up to the shore.

Now Grettir spake: "Swim off to the nets, and let me see how skilled a man thou art."

"I told thee before," said Thorir, "that I might not swim; and now I know not what is gone with thy manliness and daring."

"Well, the nets I may get in," said Grettir, "but betray thou me not, since I trust in thee."

Said Thorir, "Deem me not to be so shamed and worthless."

"Thou wilt thyself prove thyself, what thou art," said Grettir, and therewith he put off his clothes and weapons, and swam off for the nets. He swept them up together, and brought them to land, and cast them on to the bank; but when he was minded to come aland, then Thorir caught up the short-sword and drew it hastily, and ran therewith swiftly on Grettir, and smote at him as he set foot on the bank; but Grettir fell on his back down into the water, and sank like a stone; and Thorir stood gazing out on to the water, to keep him off from the shore if he came up again; but Grettir dived and groped along the bottom as near as he might to the bank, so that Thorir might not see him till he came into the creek at his back, and got aland; and Thorir heeded him not, and felt nought till Grettir heaved him up over his head, and cast him down so hard that the short-sword flew out of his hand; then Grettir got hold of it and had no words with him, but smote off his head straightway, and this was the end of his life.

But after this would Grettir never take outlaws to him, yet hardly might he bear to be alone.

CHAPTER LVII. How Thorir of Garth set on Grettir on Ernewaterheath

At the Althing Thorir of Garth heard of the slaying of Thorir Red-beard, and now he thought he saw that he had no light task to deal with; but such rede he took that he rode west over the lower heathlands from the Thing with well-nigh eighty men, and was minded to go and take Grettir's life: but when Grim Thorhallson knew thereof he sent Grettir word and bade him beware of himself, so Grettir ever took heed to the goings of men. But one day he saw many men riding who took the way to his abode; so he ran into a rift in the rocks, nor would he flee because he had not seen all the strength of those folk.

Then up came Thorir and all his men, and bade them smite Grettir's head from his body, and said that the ill-doer's life would be had cheaply now.

Grettir answered, "*Though the spoon has taken it up, yet the mouth has had no sup.* From afar have ye come, and marks of the game shall some have ere we part."

Then Thorir egged on his men busily to set on him; but the pass was narrow, and he could defend it well from one side; yet hereat he marvelled, that howsoever they went round to the back of him, yet no hurt he got thereby; some fell of Thorir's company, and some were wounded, but nothing might they do.

Then said Thorir, "Oft have I heard that Grettir is a man of marvel before all others for prowess and good heart, but never knew I that he was so wise a wizard as now I behold him; for half as many again fall at his back as fall before him; lo, now we have to do with trolls and no men."

So he bid them turn away and they did so. Grettir marvelled how that might be, for withal he was utterly foredone.

Thorir and his men turn away and ride toward the north country, and men deemed their journey to be of the shame fullest; eighteen men had they left there and many were wounded withal.

Now Grettir went up into the pass, and found there one great of growth, who sat leaning against the rock and was sore wounded. Grettir asked him of his name, and he said he was high Hallmund.

"And this I will tell thee to know me by, that thou didst deem me to have a good hold of the reins that summer when we met on the Keel; now, methinks, I have paid thee back therefor."

"Yea, in sooth," said Grettir, "I deem that thou hast shown great manliness toward me; whenso I may, I will reward thee."

Hallmund said, "But now I will that thou come to my abode, for thou must e'en think time drags heavily here on the heaths."

Grettir said he was fain thereof; and now they fare both together south under Balljokul, and there had Hallmund a huge cave, and a daughter great of growth and of high mind; there they did well to Grettir, and the woman healed the wounds of both of them, and Grettir dwelt long there that summer, and a lay he made on Hallmund, wherein is this—

Wide and high doth Hallmund stride
In the hollow mountain side.

And this stave also is therein—

At Ernewater, one by one,
Stole the swords forth in the sun,
Eager for the road of death
Swept athwart by sharp spears' breath;
Many a dead Wellwharfer's lands
That day gave to other hands.
Hallmund, dweller in the cave,
Grettir's life that day did save.

Men say that Grettir slew six men in that meeting, but Hallmund twelve.

Now as the summer wore Grettir yearned for the peopled country, to see his friends and kin; Hallmund bade him visit him when he came to the south country again, and Grettir promised him so to do; then he went west to Burgfirth, and thence to the Broadfirth Dales, and sought counsel of Thorstein Kuggson as to where he should now seek for protection, but Thorstein said that his foes were now so many that few would harbour him; "But thou mightest fare south to the Marshes and see what fate abides thee there."

So in the autumn Grettir went south to the Marshes.

CHAPTER LVIII. Grettir in Fairwoodfell

In those days dwelt at Holm Biorn the Hitdale-Champion, who was the son of Arrgeir, the son of Berse the Godless, the son of Balk, who settled Ramfirth as is aforesaid; Biorn was a great chief and a hardy man, and would ever harbour outlawed men.

Now Grettir came to Holm, and Biorn gave him good cheer, for there had been friendship between the earlier kin of both of them; so Grettir asked if he would give him harbourage; but Biorn said that he had got to himself so many feuds through all the land that men would shun harbouring him so long as to be made outlaws therefor: "But some gain will I be to thee, if thou lettest those men dwell in peace who are under my ward, whatsoever thou dost by other men in the country-side."

Grettir said yea thereto. Then said Biorn, "Well, I have thought over it, and in that mountain, which stretches forth outside of Hitriver, is a stead good for defence, and a good hiding-place withal, if it be cunningly dealt with; for there is a hollow through the mountain, that is seen from the way below; for the highway lies beneath it, but above is a slip of sand and stones so exceeding steep, that few men may come up there if one hardy man stand on his defence above in the lair. Now this seems to me the best rede for thee, and the one thing worth talking of for thine abode, because, withal, it is easy to go thence and get goods from the Marshes, and right away to the sea."

Grettir said that he would trust in his foresight if he would give him any help. Then he went up to Fairwoodfell and made his abode there; he hung grey wadmal before the hole in the mountain, and from the way below it was like to behold as if one saw through. Now he was wont to ride for things needful through the country-side, and men deemed a woful guest had come among them whereas he went.

Thord Kolbeinson dwelt at Hittness in those days, and a good skald he was; at that time was there great enmity betwixt him and Biorn; and Biorn was but half loth, though Grettir wrought some ill on Thord's men or his goods.

Grettir was ever with Biorn, and they tried their skill in many sports, and it is shown in the story of Biorn that they were deemed equal in prowess, but it is the mind of most that Grettir was the strongest man ever known in the land, since Orm the son of Storolf, and Thoralf the son of Skolm, left off their trials of strength. Grettir and Biorn swam in one spell all down Hitriver, from the lake right away to the sea: they brought those stepping-stones into the river that have never since been washed away either by floods, or the drift of ice, or glacier slips.

So Grettir abode in Fairwoodfell for one winter, in such wise, that none set on him, though many lost their goods at his hands and could do nought therefor, for a good place for defence he had, and was ever good friend to those nearest to him.

CHAPTER LIX. Gisli's meeting with Grettir

There was a man hight Gisli, the son of that Thorstein whom Snorri Godi had slain. Gisli was a big man and strong, a man showy in weapons and clothes, who made much of himself, and was somewhat of a self-praiser; he was a seafaring man, and came one summer out to Whiteriver, whenas Grettir had been a winter on the fell. Thord, son of Kolbein, rode to his ship, and Gisli gave him good welcome, and bade him take of his wares whatso he would; thereto Thord agreed, and then they fell to talk one with the other, and Gisli said:

"Is that true which is told me, that ye have no counsel that avails to rid you of a certain outlaw who is doing you great ill?"

Thord said, "We have not tried aught on him yet, but to many he seems a man hard to deal with, and that has been proven on many a man."

"It is like, methinks, that you should find Biorn a heavy trouble, if ye may not drive away this man: luckless it is for you withal, that I shall be too far off this winter to better matters for you."

"Thou wilt be better pleased to deal with him by hearsay."

"Nay, no need to tell me of Grettir," said Gisli; "I have borne harder brunts when I was in warfare along with King Knut the Mighty, and west over the Sea, and I was ever thought to hold my own; and if I should have a chance at him I would trust myself and my weapons well enough."

Thord said he would not work for nought if he prevailed against Grettir; "For there is more put upon his head than on the head of any other of wood-folk; six marks of silver it was; but last summer Thorir of Garth laid thereto yet three marks; and men deem he will have enough to do therefor whose lot it is to win it."

"All things soever will men do for money," says Gisli, "and we chapmen not the least; but now shall we keep this talk hushed up, for mayhap he will be the warier," says he, "if he come to know that I am with you against him: now I am minded to abide this winter at Snowfellsness at Wave-ridge. Is his lair on my way at all? for he will not foresee this, nor shall I draw together many men against him."

Thord liked the plot well, he rode home therewith and held his peace about this; but now things went according to the saw, *a listening ear in the holt is anear*; men had been by at the talk betwixt Thord and Gisli, who were friends to Biorn of Hittale, and they told him all from end to end; so when Biorn and Grettir met, Biorn showed forth the whole matter to him, and said that now he might prove how he could meet a foe.

"It would not be bad sport," said he, "if thou wert to handle him roughly, but to slay him not, if thou mightest do otherwise."

Grettir smiled thereat, but spake little.

Now at the folding time in the autumn Grettir went down to Flysia-wharf and got sheep for himself; he had laid hold on four wethers; but the bonders became ware of his ways and went after him; and these two things befell at the same time, that he got up under the fell-side, and that they came upon him, and would drive the sheep from him, yet bare they no weapon against him; they were six altogether, and stood thick in his path. Now the sheep troubled him and he waxed wroth, and caught up two of

those men, and cast them down over the hill-side, so that they lay stunned; and when the others saw that, they came on less eagerly; then Grettir took up the sheep and locked them together by the horns, and threw them over his shoulders, two on each side, and went up into his lair.

So the bonders turned back, and deemed they had got but ill from him, and their lot disliked them now worse than before.

Now Gisli abode at his ship through the autumn till it was rolled ashore. Many things made him abide there, so he was ready late, and rode away but a little before winter-nights. Then he went from the south, and guested under Raun on the south side of Hitriver. In the morning, before he rode thence, he began a talk with his fellows:

"Now shall we ride in coloured clothes to-day, and let the outlaw see that we are not like other wayfarers who are drifted about here day by day."

So this they did, and they were three in all: but when they came west over the river, he spake again to them:

"Here in these bents, I am told, lurks the outlaw, and no easy way is there up to him; but may it not perchance seem good to him to come and meet us and behold our array?"

They said that it was ever his wont so to do. Now that morning Grettir had risen early in his lair; the weather was cold and frosty, and snow had fallen, but not much of it. He saw how three men rode from the south over Hitriver, and their state raiment glittered and their inlaid shields. Then it came into his mind who these should be, and he deems it would be good for him to get some rag of their array; and he was right wishful withal to meet such braggarts: so he catches up his weapons and runs down the slip-side. And when Gisli heard the clatter of the stones, he spake thus:

"There goes a man down the hill-side, and somewhat big he is, and he is coming to meet us: now, therefore, let us go against him briskly, for here is good getting come to hand."

His fellows said that this one would scarce run into their very hands, if he knew not his might; "And good it is that *he bewail who brought the woe*."

So they leapt off their horses, and therewith Grettir came up to them, and laid hands on a clothes-bag that Gisli had tied to his saddle behind him, and said—

"This will I have, for oft I lowt for little things."

Gisli answers, "Nay, it shall not be; dost thou know with whom thou hast to do?"

Says Grettir, "I am not very clear about that; nor will I have much respect for persons, since I am lowly now, and ask for little."

"Mayhap thou thinkest it little," says he, "but I had rather pay down thirty hundreds; but robbery and wrong are ever uppermost in thy mind methinks; so on him, good fellows, and let see what he may do."

So did they, and Grettir gave back before them to a stone which stands by the way and is called Grettir's-Heave, and thence defended himself; and Gisli egged on his fellows eagerly; but Grettir saw now that he was no such a hardy heart as he had made believe, for he was ever behind his fellows' backs; and withal he grew aware of this fulling business, and swept round the short-sword, and smote one of Gisli's fellows to the death, and leaped down from the stone, and set on so fiercely, that Gisli shrank aback before him all along the hill-side: there Gisli's other fellow was slain, and then Grettir spake:

"Little is it seen in thee that thou hast done well wide in the world, and in ill wise dost thou part from thy fellows."

Gisli answers, "*Hottest is the fire that lies on oneself—with hell's-man are dealings ill*."

Then they gave and took but a little, before Gisli cast away his weapons, and took to his heels out along the mountain. Grettir gave him time to cast off whatso he would, and every time Gisli saw a chance for it he threw off somewhat of his clothes; and Grettir never followed him so close but that there was still some space betwixt them. Gisli ran right past that mountain and then across Coldriver-dale, and then through Aslaug's-lithe and above by Kolbeinstead, and then out into Burgh-lava; and by then was he in shirt and breech alone, and was now exceeding weary. Grettir still followed after him, and there was ever a stone's throw between them; and now he pulled up a great bush. But Gisli made

no stay till he came out at Haf-firth-river, and it was swollen with ice and ill to ford; Gisli made straightway for the river, but Grettir ran in on him and seized him, and then the strength of either was soon known: Grettir drave him down under him, and said,

"Art thou that Gisli who would fain meet Grettir Asmundson?"

Gisli answers, "I have found him now, in good sooth, nor do I know in what wise we shall part: keep that which thou hast got, and let me go free."

Grettir said, "Nay, thou art scarce deft enow to learn what I have to teach thee, so needs must I give thee somewhat to remember it by."

Therewith he pulls the shirt up over his head and let the twigs go all down his back, and along both sides of him, and Gisli strove all he might to wriggle away from him; but Grettir flogged him through and through, and then let him go; and Gisli thought he would learn no more of Grettir and have such another flogging withal; nor did he ever again earn the like skin-rubbing.

But when he got his legs under him again, he ran off unto a great pool in the river, and swam it, and came by night to a farm called Horseholt, and utterly foredone he was by then. There he lay a week with his body all swollen, and then fared to his abode.

Grettir turned back, and took up the things Gisli had cast down, and brought them to his place, nor from that time forth gat Gisli aught thereof.

Many men thought Gisli had his due herein for the noise and swagger he had made about himself; and Grettir sang this about their dealings together—

In fighting ring where steed meets steed,
The sluggish brute of mongrel breed,
Certes will shrink back nothing less
Before the stallion's dauntlessness,
Than Gisli before me to-day;
As, casting shame and clothes away,
And sweating o'er the marsh with fear,
He helped the wind from mouth and rear.

The next spring Gisli got ready to go to his ship, and bade men above all things beware of carrying aught of his goods south along the mountain, and said that the very fiend dwelt there.

Gisli rode south along the sea all the way to his ship, and never met Grettir again; and now he is out of the story.

But things grew worse between Thord Kolbeinson and Grettir, and Thord set on foot many a plot to get Grettir driven away or slain.

CHAPTER LX. Of the Fight at Hitriver

When Grettir had been two winters at Fairwoodfell, and the third was now come, he fared south to the Marshes, to the farm called Brook-bow, and had thence six wethers against the will of him who owned them. Then he went to Acres and took away two neat for slaughtering, and many sheep, and then went up south of Hitriver.

But when the bonders were ware of his ways, they sent word to Thord at Hitness, and bade him take in hand the slaying of Grettir; but he hung back, yet for the prayers of men got his son Arnor, who was afterwards called Earls' Skald, to go with them, and bade them withal to take heed that Grettir escaped not.

Then were men sent throughout all the country-side. There was a man called Biarni, who dwelt at Jorvi in Flysia-wharf, and he gathered men together from without Hitriver; and their purpose was that a band should be on either bank of the river.

Now Grettir had two men with him; a man called Eyolf, the son of the bonder at Fairwood, and a stout man; and another he had besides.

First came up Thorarin of Acres and Thorfinn of Brook-bow, and there were nigh twenty men in their company. Then was Grettir fain to make westward across the river, but therewith came up on the west side thereof Arnor and Biarni. A narrow ness ran into the water on the side whereas Grettir stood; so he drave the beasts into the furthestmost parts of the ness, when he saw the men coming up, for never would he give up what he had once laid his hands on.

Now the Marsh-men straightway made ready for an onslaught, and made themselves very big; Grettir bade his fellows take heed

that none came at his back; and not many men could come on at once.

Now a hard fight there was betwixt them, Grettir smote with the short-sword with both hands, and no easy matter it was to get at him; some of the Marsh-men fell, and some were wounded; those on the other side of the river were slow in coming up, because the ford was not very near, nor did the fight go on long before they fell off; Thorarin of Acres was a very old man, so that he was not at this onslaught. But when this fight was over, then came up Thrand, son of Thorarin, and Thorgils Ingialdson, the brother's son of Thorarin, and Finnogi, son of Thorgeir Thorhaddson of Hitdale, and Steinulf Thorleifson from Lavadale; these egged on their men eagerly to set on, and yet another fierce onslaught they made. Now Grettir saw that he must either flee or spare himself nought; and now he went forth so fiercely that none might withstand him; because they were so many that he saw not how he might escape, but that he did his best before he fell; he was fain withal that the life of such an one as he deemed of some worth might be paid for his life; so he ran at Steinulf of Lavadale, and smote him on the head and clave him down to the shoulders, and straightway with another blow smote Thorgils Ingialdson in the midst and well-nigh cut him asunder; then would Thrand run forth to revenge his kinsman, but Grettir smote him on the right thigh, so that the blow took off all the muscle, and straightway was he unmeet for fight; and thereafter withal a great wound Grettir gave to Finnogi.

Then Thorarin cried out and bade them fall back, "For the longer ye fight the worse ye will get of him, and he picks out men even as he willeth from your company."

So did they, and turned away; and there had ten men fallen, and five were wounded to death, or crippled, but most of those who had been at that meeting had some hurt or other; Grettir was marvellously wearied and yet but a little wounded.

And now the Marsh-men made off with great loss of men, for many stout fellows had fallen there.

But those on the other side of the river fared slowly, and came not up till the meeting was all done; and when they saw how ill their men had fared, then Arnor would not risk himself, and much rebuke he got therefor from his father and many others; and men are minded to think that he was no man of prowess.

Now that place where they fought is called Grettir's-point today.

CHAPTER LXI. How Grettir left Fairwoodfell, and of his abiding in Thorir's-dale.

But Grettir and his men took horse and rode up to the fell, for they were all wounded, and when they came to Fairwood there was Eyolf left; the farmer's daughter was out of doors, and asked for tidings; Grettir told all as clearly as might be, and sang a stave withal—

O thou warder of horn's wave,
Not on this side of the grave
Will Steinulf's head be whole again;
Many more there gat their bane;
Little hope of Thorgils now
After that bone-breaking blow:
Eight Gold-scatterers more they say,
Dead along the river lay.

Thereafter Grettir went to his lair and sat there through the winter; but when he and Biorn met, Biorn said to him, that he deemed that much had been done; "and no peace thou wilt have here in the long run: now hast thou slain both kin and friends of mine, yet shall I not cast aside what I have promised thee whiles thou art here."

Grettir said he must needs defend his hands and life, "but ill it is if thou mislikest it."

Biorn said that things must needs be as they were.

A little after came men to Biorn who had lost kinsmen at Grettir's hands, and bade him not to suffer that riotous man to abide there longer in their despite; and Biorn said that it should be as they would as soon as the winter was over.

Now Thrand, the son of Thorarin of Acres, was healed; a stout man he was, and had to wife Steinun, daughter of Rut of Combeness; Thorleif of Lavadale, the father of Steinulf, was a very mighty man, and from him are come the men of Lavadale.

Now nought more is told of the dealings of Grettir with the Marsh-men while he was on the mountain; Biorn still kept up his friendship with him, though his friends grew somewhat the fewer for that he let Grettir abide there, because men took it ill that their kin should fall unatoned.

At the time of the Thing, Grettir departed from the Marsh-country, and went to Burgfirth and found Grim Thorhallson, and sought counsel of him, as to what to do now. Grim said he had no strength to keep him, therefore fared Grettir to find Hallmund his friend, and dwelt there that summer till it wore to its latter end.

In the autumn Grettir went to Goatland, and waited there till bright weather came on; then he went up to Goatland Jokul, and made for the south-east, and had with him a kettle, and tools to strike fire withal. But men deem that he went there by the counsel of Hallmund, for far and wide was the land known of him.

So Grettir went on till he found a dale in the jokul, long and somewhat narrow, locked up by jokuls all about, in such wise that they overhung the dale. He came down somehow, and then he saw fair hill-sides grass-grown and set with bushes. Hot springs there were therein, and it seemed to him that it was by reason of earth-fires that the ice-cliffs did not close up over the vale.

A little river ran along down the dale, with level shores on either side thereof. There the sun came but seldom; but he deemed he might scarcely tell over the sheep that were in that valley, so many they were; and far better and fatter than any he had ever seen.

Now Grettir abode there, and made himself a hut of such wood as he could come by. He took of the sheep for his meat, and there was more on one of them than on two elsewhere: one ewe there was, brown with a polled head, with her lamb, that he deemed the greatest beauty for her goodly growth. He was fain to take the lamb, and so he did, and thereafter slaughtered it: three stone of suet there was in it, but the whole carcase was even better. But when Brownhead missed her lamb, she went up on Grettir's hut every night, and bleated in suchwise that he might not sleep anight, so that it misliked him above all things that he had slaughtered the lamb, because of her troubling.

But every evening at twilight he heard some one hoot up in the valley, and then all the sheep ran together to one fold every evening.

So Grettir says, that a half-troll ruled over the valley, a giant hight Thorir, and in trust of his keeping did Grettir abide there; by him did Grettir name the valley, calling it Thorir's-dale. He said withal that Thorir had daughters, with whom he himself had good game, and that they took it well, for not many were the new-comers thereto; but when fasting time was, Grettir made this change therein, that fat and livers should be eaten in Lent.

Now nought happened to be told of through the winter. At last Grettir found it so dreary there, that he might abide there no longer: then he gat him gone from the valley, and went south across the jokul, and came from the north, right against the midst of Shieldbroadfell.

He raised up a flat stone and bored a hole therein, and said that whoso put his eye to the hole in that stone should straightway behold the gulf of the pass that leads from Thorir's-vale.

So he fared south through the land, and thence to the Eastfirths; and in this journey he was that summer long, and the winter, and met all the great men there, but somewhat ever thrust him aside that nowhere got he harbouring or abode; then he went back by the north, and dwelt at sundry places.

CHAPTER LXII. Of the Death of Hallmund, Grettir's Friend.

A little after Grettir had gone from Ernewaterheath, there came a man thither, Grim by name, the son of the widow at Kropp. He had slain the son of Eid Skeggison of the Ridge, and had been outlawed therefor; he abode whereas Grettir had dwelt afore, and got much fish from the water. Hallmund took it ill that he had

come in Grettir's stead, and was minded that he should have little good hap how much fish soever he caught.

So it chanced on a day that Grim had caught a hundred fish, and he bore them to his hut and hung them up outside, but the next morning when he came thereto they were all gone; that he deemed marvellous, and went to the water; and now he caught two hundred fish, went home and stored them up; and all went the same way, for they were all gone in the morning; and now he thought it hard to trace all to one spring. But the third day he caught three hundred fish, brought them home and watched over them from his shed, looking out through a hole in the door to see if aught might come anigh. Thus wore the night somewhat, and when the third part of the night was gone by, he heard one going along outside with heavy footfalls; and when he was ware thereof, he took an axe that he had, the sharpest of weapons, for he was fain to know what this one was about; and he saw that the new-comer had a great basket on his back. Now he set it down, and peered about, and saw no man abroad; he gropes about to the fishes, and deems he has got a good handful, and into the basket he scoops them one and all; then is the basket full, but the fishes were so big that Grim thought that no horse might bear more. Now he takes them up and puts himself under the load, and at that very point of time, when he was about to stand upright, Grim ran out, and with both hands smote at his neck, so that the axe sank into the shoulder; thereat he turned off sharp, and set off running with the basket south over the mountain.

Grim turned off after him, and was fain to know if he had got enough. They went south all the way to Balljokul, and there this man went into a cave; a bright fire burnt in the cave, and thereby sat a woman, great of growth, but shapely withal. Grim heard how she welcomed her father, and called him Hallmund. He cast down his burden heavily, and groaned aloud; she asked him why he was all covered with blood, but he answered and sang—

Now know I aright,
That in man's might,
And in man's bliss,
No trust there is;
On the day of bale
Shall all things fail;
Courage is o'er,
Luck mocks no more.

She asked him closely of their dealings, but he told her all even as it had befallen.

"Now shall thou hearken," said he, "for I shall tell of my deeds and sing a song thereon, and thou shalt cut it on a staff as I give it out."

So she did, and he sung Hallmund's song withal, wherein is this—

When I drew adown
The bridle brown
Grettir's hard hold,
Men deemed me bold;
Long while looked then
The brave of men
In his hollow hands,
The harm of lands.
"Then came the day
Of Thorir's play
On Ernelakeheath,
When we from death
Our life must gain;
Alone we twain
With eighty men
Must needs play then.
"Good craft enow
Did Grettir show
On many a shield
In that same field;
Natheless I hear
That my marks were
The deepest still;
The worst to fill.
"Those who were fain
His back to gain
Lost head and hand,
Till of the band,
From the Well-wharf-side,
Must there abide
Eighteen behind
That none can find.

"With the giant's kin
Have I oft raised din;
To the rock folk
Have I dealt out stroke;
Ill things could tell
That I smote full well;
The half-trolls know
My baneful blow.
"Small gain in me
Did the elf-folk see,
Or the evil wights
Who ride anights.

Many other deeds of his did Hallmund sing in that song, for he had fared through all the land.

Then spake his daughter, "A man of no slippery hand was that; nor was it unlike that this should hap, for in evil wise didst thou begin with him: and now what man will he avenge thee?"

Hallmund answered, "It is not so sure to know how that may be; but, methinks, I know that Grettir would avenge me if he might come thereto; but no easy matter will it be to go against the luck of this man, for much greatness lies stored up for him."

Thereafter so much did Hallmund's might wane as the song wore, that well-nigh at one while it befell that the song was done and Hallmund dead; then she grew very sad and wept right sore. Then came Grim forth and bade her be of better cheer, "*For all must fare when they are fetched*. This has been brought about by his own deed, for I could scarce look on while he robbed me."

She said he had much to say for it, "*For ill deed gains ill hap*."

Now as they talked she grew of better cheer, and Grim abode many nights in the cave, and got the song by heart, and things went smoothly betwixt them.

Grim abode at Ernewaterheath all the winter after Hallmund's death, and thereafter came Thorkel Eyulfson to meet him on the Heath, and they fought together; but such was the end of their play that Grim might have his will of Thorkel's life, and slew him not. So Thorkel took him to him, and got him sent abroad and gave him many goods; and therein either was deemed to have done well to the other. Grim betook himself to seafaring, and a great tale is told of him.

CHAPTER LXIII. How Grettir beguiled Thorir of Garth when he was nigh taking him

Now the story is to be taken up where Grettir came from the firths of the east-country; and now he fared with hidden-head for that he would not meet Thorir, and lay out that summer on Madderdale-heath and in sundry places, and at whiles he was at Reek-heath.

Thorir heard that Grettir was at Reek-heath, so he gathered men and rode to the heath, and was well minded that Grettir should not escape this time.

Now Grettir was scarce aware of them before they were on him; he was just by a mountain-dairy that stood back a little from the wayside, and another man there was with him, and when he saw their band, speedy counsel must he take; so he bade that they should fell the horses and drag them into the dairy shed, and so it was done.

Then Thorir rode north over the heath by the dairy, and *missed friend from stead*, for he found nought, and so turned back withal.

But when his band had ridden away west, then said Grettir, "They will not deem their journey good if we be not found; so now shall thou watch our horses while I go meet them, a fair play would be shown them if they knew me not."

His fellow strove to let him herein, yet he went none-the-less, and did on him other attire, with a slouched hat over his face and a staff in his hand, then he went in the way before them. They greeted him and asked if he had seen any men riding over the heath.

"Those men that ye seek have I seen; but little was wanting e'nnow but that ye found them, for there they were, on the south of yon bogs to the left."

Now when they heard that, off they galloped out on to the bogs, but so great a mire was there that nohow could they get on, and had to drag their horses out, and were wallowing there the more

part of the day; and they gave to the devil withal the wandering churl who had so befooled them.

But Grettir turned back speedily to meet his fellow, and when they met he sang this stave—

Now make I no battle-field
With the searching stems of shield.
Rife with danger is my day,
And alone I go my way:
Nor shall I go meet, this tide,
Odin's storm, but rather bide
Whatso fate I next may have;
Scarce, then, shall thou deem me brave.
"Thence where Thorir's company
Thronging ride, I needs must flee;
If with them I raised the din,
Little thereby should I win;
Brave men's clashing swords I shun,
Woods must hide the hunted one;
For through all things, good and ill,
Unto life shall I hold still.

Now they ride at their swiftest west over the heath and forth by the homestead at Garth, before ever Thorir came from the wilderness with his band; and when they drew nigh to the homestead a man fell in with them who knew them not.

Then saw they how a woman, young and grand of attire, stood without, so Grettir asked who that woman would be. The new-comer said that she was Thorir's daughter. Then Grettir sang this stave—

O wise sun of golden stall,
When thy sire comes back to hall,
Thou mayst tell him without sin
This, though little lies therein,
That thou saw'st me ride hereby,
With but two in company,
Past the door of Skeggi's son,
Nigh his hearth, O glittering one.

Hereby the new-comer thought he knew who this would be, and he rode to peopled parts and told how Grettir had ridden by.

So when Thorir came home, many deemed that Grettir had done the bed well over their heads. But Thorir set spies on Grettir's ways, whereso he might be. Grettir fell on such rede that he sent his fellow to the west country with his horses; but he went up to the mountains and was in disguised attire, and fared about north there in the early winter, so that he was not known.

But all men deemed that Thorir had got a worse part than before in their dealings together.

CHAPTER LXIV. Of the ill haps at Sand-heaps, and how Guest came to the Goodwife there

There was a priest called Stein, who dwelt at Isledale-river, in Bard-dale; he was good at husbandry and rich in beasts; his son was Kiartan, a brisk man and a well grown. Thorstein the White was the name of him who dwelt at Sand-heaps, south of Isledale-river; his wife was called Steinvor, a young woman and merry-hearted, and children they had, who were young in those days. But that place men deemed much haunted by the goings of trolls.

Now it befell two winters before Grettir came into the north country that Steinvor the goodwife of Sand-heaps fared at Yule-tide to the stead of Isledale-river according to her wont, but the Goodman abode at home. Men lay down to sleep in the evening, but in the night they heard a huge crashing about the bonder's bed; none durst arise and see thereto, for very few folk were there. In the morning the goodwife came home, but the Goodman was gone, and none knew what had become of him.

Now the next year wears through its seasons, but the winter after the goodwife would fain go to worship, and bade her house-carle abide behind at home; thereto was he loth, but said nathless that she must rule; so all went the same way and the house-carle vanished; and marvellous men deemed it; but folk saw certain stains of blood about the outer door; therefore they deemed it sure that an evil wight had taken them both.

Now that was heard of wide through the country-side, and Grettir withal was told thereof; so he took his way to Bard-dale, and came to Sand-heaps at Yule-eve, and made stay there, and

called himself Guest. The goodwife saw that he was marvellous great of growth, but the home-folk were exceeding afeard of him; he prayed for guesting there; the mistress said that there was meat ready for him, "but as to thy safety see to that thyself."

He said that so he should do: "Here will I abide, but thou shalt go to worship if thou wilt."

She answered, "Meseems thou art a brave man if thou durst abide at home here."

"For one thing alone will I not be known," said he.

She said, "I have no will to abide at home, but I may not cross the river."

"I will go with thee," says Guest.

Then she made her ready for worship, and her little daughter with her. It thawed fast abroad, and the river was in flood, and therein was the drift of ice great: then said the goodwife,

"No way across is there either for man or horse."

"Nay, there will be fords there," said Guest, "be not afeard."

"Carry over the little maiden first," said the goodwife; "she is the lightest."

"I am loth to make two journeys of it," said Guest, "I will bear thee in my arms."

She crossed herself, and said, "This will not serve; what wilt thou do with the maiden?"

"A rede I see for that," said he, and therewith caught them both up, and laid the little one in her mother's lap, and set both of them thus on his left arm, but had his right free; and so he took the ford withal, nor durst they cry out, so afeard were they.

Now the river took him up to his breast forthwith, and a great ice-floe drave against him, but he put forth the hand that was free and thrust it from him; then it grew so deep, that the stream broke on his shoulder; but he waded through it stoutly, till he came to the further shore, and there cast them aland: then he turned back, and it was twilight already by then he came home to Sand-heaps, and called for his meat.

So when he was fulfilled, he bade the home-folk go into the chamber; then he took boards and loose timber, and dragged it athwart the chamber, and made a great bar, so that none of the home-folk might come thereover: none durst say aught against him, nor would any of them make the least sound. The entrance to the hall was through the side wall by the gable, and dais was there within; there Guest lay down, but did not put off his clothes, and light burned in the chamber over against the door: and thus Guest lay till far on in the night.

The goodwife came to Isledale-river at church-time, and men marvelled how she had crossed the river; and she said she knew not whether a man or a troll had brought her over.

The priest said he was surely a man, though a match for few; "But let us hold our peace hereon," he said; "maybe he is chosen for the bettering of thy troubles." So the goodwife was there through the night.

CHAPTER LXV. Of Guest and the Troll-wife.

Now it is to be told of Guest, that when it drew towards midnight, he heard great din without, and thereafter into the hall came a huge troll-wife, with a trough in one hand and a chopper wondrous great in the other; she peered about when she came in, and saw where Guest lay, and ran at him; but he sprang up to meet her, and they fell a-wrestling terribly, and struggled together for long in the hall. She was the stronger, but he gave back with craft, and all that was before them was broken, yea, the cross-panelling withal of the chamber. She dragged him out through the door, and so into the outer doorway, and then he betook himself to struggling hard against her. She was fain to drag him from the house, but might not until they had broken away all the fittings of the outer door, and borne them out on their shoulders: then she laboured away with him down towards the river, and right down to the deep gulfs.

By then was Guest exceeding weary, yet must he either gather his might together, or be cast by her into the gulf. All night did they contend in such wise; never, he deemed, had he fought with such a horror for her strength's sake; she held him to her so hard

that he might turn his arms to no account save to keep fast hold on the middle of the witch.

But now when they came on to the gulf of the river, he gives the hag a swing round, and therewith got his right hand free, and swiftly seized the short-sword that he was girt withal, and smote the troll therewith on the shoulder, and struck off her arm; and therewithal was he free, but she fell into the gulf and was carried down the force.

Then was Guest both stiff and weary, and lay there long on the rocks, then he went home, as it began to grow light, and lay down in bed, and all swollen and blue he was.

But when the goodwife came from church, she thought her house had been somewhat roughly handled: so she went to Guest and asked what had happened that all was broken and down-trodden. He told her all as it had befallen: she deemed these things imported much, and asked him what man he was in good sooth. So he told her the truth, and prayed that the priest might be fetched, for that he would fain see him: and so it was done.

But when Stein the priest came to Sand-heaps, he knew forthwith, that thither was come Grettir Asmundson, under the name of Guest.

So the priest asked what he deemed had become of those men who had vanished; and Grettir said that he thought they would have gone into the gulf: the priest said that he might not trow that, if no signs could be seen thereof: then said Grettir that later on that should be known more thoroughly. So the priest went home.

Grettir lay many nights a-bed, and the mistress did well to him, and so Yule-tide wore.

Now Grettir's story is that the troll-wife cast herself into the gulf when she got her wound; but the men of Bard-dale say that day dawned on her, while they wrestled, and that she burst, when he cut the arm from her; and that there she stands yet on the cliff, a rock in the likeness of a woman.

Now the dale-dwellers kept Grettir in hiding there; but in the winter after Yule, Grettir fared to Isledale-river, and when he met the priest, he said, "Well, priest, I see that thou hadst little faith in my tale; now will I, that thou go with me to the river, and see what likelihood there is of that tale being true."

So the priest did; and when they came to the force-side, they saw a cave up under the cliff; a sheer rock that cliff was, so great that in no place might man come up thereby, and well-nigh fifty fathoms was it down to the water. Now they had a rope with them, but the priest said:

"A risk beyond all measure, I deem it to go down here."

"Nay," said Grettir, "it is to be done, truly, but men of the greatest prowess are meetest therefor: now will I know what is in the force, but thou shall watch the rope."

The priest bade him follow his own rede, and drave a peg down into the sward on the cliff, and heaped stones up over it, and sat thereby.

CHAPTER LXVI. Of the Dweller in the Cave under the Force

Now it is to be told of Grettir that he set a stone in a bight of the rope and let it sink down into the water.

"In what wise hast thou mind to go?" said the priest.

"I will not go bound into the force," said Grettir; "such things doth my heart forebode."

With that he got ready for his journey, and was lightly clad, and girt with the short-sword, and had no weapon more.

Then he leapt off the cliff into the force; the priest saw the soles of his feet, and knew not afterwards what was become of him. But Grettir dived under the force, and hard work it was, because the whirlpool was strong, and he had to dive down to the bottom, before he might come up under the force. But thereby was a rock jutting out, and thereon he gat; a great cave was under the force, and the river fell over it from the sheer rocks. He went up into the cave, and there was a great fire flaming from amidst of brands; and there he saw a giant sitting withal, marvellously great and dreadful to look on. But when Grettir came anigh, the giant leapt up and caught up a glaive and smote at the new-comer, for with

that glaive might a man both cut and thrust; a wooden shaft it had, and that fashion of weapon men called then, heft-sax. Grettir hewed back against him with the short-sword, and smote the shaft so that he struck it asunder; then was the giant fain to stretch aback for a sword that hung up there in the cave; but therewithal Grettir smote him afore into the breast, and smote off well-nigh all the breast bone and the belly, so that the bowels tumbled out of him and fell into the river, and were driven down along the stream; and as the priest sat by the rope, he saw certain fibres all covered with blood swept down the swirls of the stream; then he grew unsteady in his place, and thought for sure that Grettir was dead, so he ran from the holding of the rope, and gat him home. Thither he came in the evening and said, as one who knew it well, that Grettir was dead, and that great scathe was it of such a man.

Now of Grettir must it be told that he let little space go betwixt his blows or ever the giant was dead; then he went up the cave, and kindled a light and espied the cave. The story tells not how much he got therein, but men deem that it must have been something great. But there he abode on into the night; and he found there the bones of two men, and bore them together in a bag; then he made off from the cave and swam to the rope and shook it, and thought that the priest would be there yet; but when he knew that the priest had gone home, then must he draw himself up by strength of hand, and thus he came up out on to the cliff.

Then he fared home to Isledale-river, and brought into the church porch the bag with the bones, and therewithal a rune-staff whereon this song was marvellous well cut—

There into gloomy gulf I passed,
O'er which from the rock's throat is cast
The swirling rush of waters wan,
To meet the sword-player feared of man,
By giant's hall the strong stream pressed
Cold hands against the singer's breast;
Huge weight upon him there did hurl
The swallower of the changing whirl.

And this other one withal—

The dreadful dweller of the cave
Great strokes and many 'gainst me drave;
Full hard he had to strive for it,
But toiling long he wan no whit;
For from its mighty shaft of tree
The heft-sax smote I speedily,
And dulled the flashing war-flame fair
In the black breast that met me there.

Herein was it said how that Grettir had brought those bones from the cave; but when the priest came to the church in the morning he found the staff and that which went with it, but Grettir was gone home to Sand-heaps.

CHAPTER LXVII. Grettir driven from Sand-heaps to the West

But when the priest met Grettir he asked him closely about what had happened; so he told him all the tale of his doings, and said withal that the priest had been unfaithful to him in the matter of the rope-holding; and the priest must needs say that so it was.

Now men deemed they could see that these evil wights had wrought the loss of the men there in the dale; nor had folk hurt ever after from aught haunting the valley, and Grettir was thought to have done great deeds for the cleansing of the land. So the priest laid those bones in earth in the churchyard.

But Grettir abode at Sand-heaps the winter long, and was hidden there from all the world.

But when Thorir of Garth heard certain rumours of Grettir being in Bard-dale, he sent men for his head; then men gave him counsel to get him gone therefrom, so he took his way to the west.

Now when he came to Maddervales to Gudmund the Rich, he prayed Gudmund for watch and ward; but Gudmund said he might not well keep him. "But that only is good for thee," said he, "to set thee down there, whereas thou shouldst have no fear of thy life."

Grettir said he wotted not where such a place might be.

Gudmund said, "An isle there lies in Skagafirth called Drangey; so good a place for defence it is, that no man may come thereon unless ladders be set thereto. If thou mightest get there, I know for sure that no man who might come against thee, could have

good hope while thou wert on the top thereof, of overcoming thee, either by weapons or craft, if so be thou shouldst watch the ladders well."

"That shall be tried," said Grettir, "but so fearsome of the dark am I grown, that not even for the keeping of my life may I be alone."

Gudmund said, "Well, that may be; but trust no man whatsoever so much as not to trust thyself better; for many men are hard to see through."

Grettir thanked him for his wholesome redes, and then fared away from Maddervales, nor made stay before he came to Biarg; there his mother and Illugi his brother welcomed him joyfully, and he abode there certain nights.

There he heard of the slaying of Thorstein Kuggson, which had befallen the autumn before Grettir went to Bard-dale; and he deemed therewithal that felling went on fast enough.

Then Grettir rode south to Holtbeacon-heath, and was minded to avenge Hallmund if he might meet Grim; but when he came to Northriverdale, he heard that Grim had been gone two winters ago, as is aforesaid; but Grettir had heard so late of these tidings because he had gone about disguised those two winters, and the third winter he had been in Thorirs-dale, and had seen no man who might tell him any news. Then he betook himself to the Broadfirth-dales, and dwelt in Eastriverdale, and lay in wait for folk who fared over Steep-brent; and once more he swept away with the strong hand the goods of the small bonders. This was about the height of summer-tide.

Now when the summer was well worn, Steinvor of Sand-heaps bore a man-child, who was named Skeggi; he was first fathered on Kiartan, the son of Stein, the priest of Isle-dale-river. Skeggi was unlike unto his kin because of his strength and growth, but when he was fifteen winters old he was the strongest man in the north-country, and was then known as Grettir's son; men deemed he would be a marvel among men, but he died when he was seventeen years of age, and no tale there is of him.

CHAPTER LXVIII. How Thorod, the Son of Snorri Godi, went against Grettir.

After the slaying of Thorstein Kuggson, Snorri Godi would have little to do with his son Thorod, or with Sam, the son of Bork the Fat; it is not said what they had done therefor, unless it might be that they had had no will to do some great deed that Snorri set them to; but withal Snorri drave his son Thorod away, and said he should not come back till he had slain some wood-dweller; and so must matters stand.

So Thorod went over to the Dales; and at that time dwelt at Broadlair-stead in Sokkolfsdale a widow called Geirlaug; a herdsman she kept, who had been outlawed for some onslaught; and he was a growing lad. Now Thorod Snorrison heard thereof, and rode in to Broadlair-stead, and asked where was the herdsman; the goodwife said that he was with the sheep.

"What wilt thou have to do with him?"

"His life will I have," says Thorod, "because he is an outlaw, and a wood-wight."

She answers, "No glory is it for such a great warrior as thou deemest thyself, to slay a mannikin like that; I will show thee a greater deed, if thine heart is so great that thou must needs try thyself."

"Well, and what deed?" says he.

She answers, "Up in the fell here, lies Grettir Asmundson; play thou with him, for such a game is more meet for thee."

Thorod took her talk well; "So shall it be," says he, and therewith he smote his horse with his spurs, and rode along the valley; and when he came to the hill below Eastriver, he saw where was a dun horse, with his saddle on, and thereby a big man armed, so he turned thence to meet him.

Grettir greeted him, and asked who he was. Thorod named himself, and said,

"Why askest thou not of my errand rather than of my name?"

"Why, because," said Grettir, "it is like to be such as is of little weight: art thou son to Snorri Godi?"

"Yea, yea," says Thorod; "but now shall we try which of us may do the most."

"A matter easy to be known," says Grettir; "hast thou not heard that I have ever been a treasure-hill that most men grope in with little luck?"

"Yea, I know it," said Thorod; "yet must somewhat be risked."

And now he drew his sword therewith and set on Grettir eagerly; but Grettir warded himself with his shield, but bore no weapon against Thorod; and so things went awhile, nor was Grettir wounded.

At last he said, "Let us leave this play, for thou wilt not have victory in our strife."

But Thorod went on dealing blows at his maddest. Now Grettir got aweary of dealing with him, and caught him and set him down by his side, and said—

"I may do with thee even as I will, nor do I fear that thou wilt ever be my bane; but the grey old carle, thy father, Snorri, I fear in good sooth, and his counsels that have brought most men to their knees; and for thee, thou shouldst turn thy mind to such things alone as thou mayst get done, nor is it child's play to fight with me."

But when Thorod saw that he might bring nought to pass, he grew somewhat appeased, and therewithal they parted. Thorod rode home to Tongue and told his father of his dealings with Grettir. Snorri Godi smiled thereat, and said,

"Many a man lies hid within himself, and far unlike were your doings; for thou must needs rush at him to slay him, and he might have done with thee even as he would. Yet wisely has Grettir done herein, that he slew thee not; for I should scarce have had a mind to let thee lie unavenged; but now indeed shall I give him aid, if I have aught to do with any of his matters."

It was well seen of Snorri, that he deemed Grettir had done well to Thorod, and he ever after gave his good word for Grettir.

CHAPTER LXIX. How Grettir took leave of his Mother at Biarg, and fared with Illugi his Brother to Drangey

Grettir rode north to Biarg a little after he parted with Thorod, and lay hid there yet awhile; then so great grew his fear in the dark, that he durst go nowhere as soon as dusk set in. His mother bade him abide there, but said withal, that she saw that it would scarce avail him aught, since he had so many cases against him throughout all the land. Grettir said that she should never have trouble brought on her for his sake.

"But I shall no longer do so much for the keeping of my life," says he, "as to be alone."

Now Illugi his brother was by that time about fifteen winters old, and the goodliest to look on of all men; and he overheard their talk together. Grettir was telling his mother what rede Gudmund the Rich had given him, and now that he should try, if he had a chance, to get out to Drangey, but he said withal, that he might not abide there, unless he might get some trusty man to be with him. Then said Illugi,

"I will go with thee, brother, though I know not that I shall be of any help to thee, unless it be that I shall be ever true to thee, nor run from thee whiles thou standest up; and moreover I shall know more surely how thou farest if I am still in thy fellowship."

Grettir answered, "Such a man thou art, that I am gladder in thee than in any other; and if it cross not my mother's mind, fain were I that thou shouldst fare with me."

Then said Asdis, "Now can I see that it has come to this, that two troubles lie before us: for meseems I may ill spare Illugi, yet I know that so hard is thy lot, Grettir, that thou must in somewise find rede therof: and howsoever it grieves me, O my sons, to see you both turn your backs on me, yet thus much will I do, if Grettir might thereby be somewhat more holpen than heretofore."

Hereat was Illugi glad, for that he deemed it good to go with Grettir.

So she gave them much of her chattels, and they made them ready for their journey. Asdis led them from out the garth, and before they parted she spake thus:

"Ah, my sons twain, there ye depart from me, and one death ye shall have together; for no man may flee from that which is wrought for him: on no day now shall I see either of you once again; let one fate be over you both, then; for I know not what weal ye go to get for yourselves in Drangey, but there shall ye both lay your bones, and many will begrudge you that abiding place. Keep ye heedfully from wiles, yet none the less there shall ye be bitten of the edge of the sword, for marvellously have my dreams gone: be well ware of sorcery, for *little can cope with the cunning of eld*."

And when she had thus spoken she wept right sore.

Then said Grettir, "Weep not, mother, for if we be set on with weapons, it shall be said of thee, that thou hast had sons, and not daughters: live on, well and hale."

Therewithal they parted. They fared north through the country side and saw their kin; and thus they lingered out the autumn into winter; then they turned toward Skagafirth and went north through Waterpass and thence to Reekpass, and down Saemundslithe and so unto Longholt, and came to Dinby late in the day.

Grettir had cast his hood back on to his shoulders, for in that wise he went ever abroad whether the day were better or worse. So they went thence, and when they had gone but a little way, there met them a man, big-headed, tall, and gaunt, and ill clad; he greeted them, and either asked other for their names; they said who they were, but he called himself Thorbiorn: he was a land-louper, a man too lazy to work, and a great swaggerer, and much game and fooling was made with him by some folk: he thrust himself into their company, and told them much from the upper country about the folk there. Grettir had great game and merriment of him; so he asked if they had no need of a man who should work for them, "for I would fain fare with you," says he; and withal he got so much from their talk that they suffered him to follow them.

Much snow there was that day, and it was cold; but whereas that man swaggered exceedingly, and was the greatest of tomfools, he had a by-name, and was called Noise.

"Great wonder had those of Dinby when thou wentest by e'en now unhooded, in the foul weather," said Noise, "as to whether thou wouldst have as little fear of men as of the cold: there were two bonders' sons, both men of great strength, and the shepherd called them forth to go to the sheep-watching with him, and scarcely could they clothe themselves for the cold."

Grettir said, "I saw within doors there a young man who pulled on his mittens, and another going betwixt byre and midden, and of neither of them should I be afear'd."

Thereafter they went down to Sorbness, and were there through the night; then they fared out along the strand to a farm called Reeks, where dwelt a man, Thorwald by name, a good bonder. Him Grettir prayed for watch and ward, and told him how he was minded to get out to Drangey: the bonder said that those of Skagafirth would think him no god-send, and excused himself therewithal.

Then Grettir took a purse his mother had given to him, and gave it to the bonder; his brows lightened over the money, and he got three house-carles of his to bring them out in the night time by the light of the moon. It is but a little way from Reeks out to the island, one sea-mile only. So when they came to the isle, Grettir deemed it good to behold, because it was grass-grown, and rose up sheer from the sea, so that no man might come up thereon save there where the ladders were let down, and if the uppermost ladder were drawn up, it was no man's deed to get upon the island. There also were the cliffs full of fowl in the summer-tide, and there were eighty sheep upon the island which the bonders owned, and they were mostly rams and ewes which they had mind to slaughter.

There Grettir set himself down in peace; and by then had he been fifteen or sixteen winters in outlawry, as Sturla Thordson has said.

CHAPTER LXX. Of the Bonders who owned Drangey between them

In the days when Grettir came to Drangey, these were chief men of the country side of Skagafirth. Hialti dwelt at Hof in Hialtidale,

he was the son of Thord, the son of Hialti, the son of Thord the Scalp: Hialti was a great chief, a right noble man, and much befriended. Thorbiorn Angle was the name of his brother, a big man and a strong, hardy and wild withal. Thord, the father of these twain, had married again in his old age, and that wife was not the mother of the brothers; and she did ill to her step-children, but served Thorbiorn the worst, for that he was hard to deal with and reckless. And on a day Thorbiorn Angle sat playing at tables, and his stepmother passed by and saw that he was playing at the knave-game, and the fashion of the game was the large tail-game. Now she deemed him thriftless, and cast some word at him, but he gave an evil answer; so she caught up one of the men, and drave the tail thereof into Thorbiorn's cheek-bone wherefrom it glanced into his eye, so that it hung out on his cheek. He sprang up, caught hold of her, and handled her roughly, insomuch that she took to her bed, and died thereof afterwards, and folk say that she was then big with child.

Thereafter Thorbiorn became of all men the most riotous; he took his heritage, and dwelt at first in Woodwick.

Haldor the son of Thorgeir, who was the son of Head-Thord, dwelt at Hof on Head-strand, he had to wife Thordis, the daughter of Thord Hialtison, and sister to those brothers Hialti and Thorbiorn Angle. Haldor was a great bonder, and rich in goods.

Biorn was the name of a man who dwelt at Meadness in the Fleets; he was a friend to Haldor of Hof. These men held to each other in all cases.

Tongue-Stein dwelt at Stonestead; he was the son of Biorn, the son of Ufeigh Thinbeard, son of that Crow-Hreidar to whom Eric of God-dales gave the tongue of land down from Hall-marsh. Stein was a man of great renown.

One named Eric was the son of Holmgang-Starri, the son of Eric of God-dales, the son of Hroald, the son of Geirmund Thick-beard; Eric dwelt at Hof in God-dales.

Now all these were men of great account.

Two brothers there were who dwelt at a place called Broad-river in Flat-lithe, and they were both called Thord; they were wondrous strong, and yet withal peaceable men both of them.

All these men had share in Drangey, and it is said that no less than twenty in all had some part in the island, nor would any sell his share to another; but the sons of Thord, Hialti and Thorbiorn Angle, had the largest share, because they were the richest men.

CHAPTER LXXI. How those of Skagafirth found Grettir on Drangey

Now time wears on towards the winter solstice; then the bonders get ready to go fetch the fat beasts for slaughter from the island; so they manned a great barge, and every owner had one to go in his stead, and some two.

But when these came anigh the island they saw men going about there; they deemed that strange, but guessed that men had been shipwrecked, and got aland there: so they row up to where the ladders were, when lo, the first-comers drew up the ladders.

Then the bonders deemed that things were taking a strange turn, and hailed those men and asked them who they were: Grettir named himself and his fellows withal: but the bonders asked who had brought him there.

Grettir answered, "He who owned the keel and had the hands, and who was more my friend than yours."

The bonders answered and said, "Let us now get our sheep, but come thou aland with us, keeping freely whatsof of our sheep thou hast slaughtered."

"A good offer," said Grettir, "but this time let each keep what he has got; and I tell you, once for all, that hence I go not, till I am dragged away dead; for it is not my way to let that go loose which I have once laid hand on."

Thereat the bonders held their peace, and deemed that a woeful guest had come to Drangey; then they gave him choice of many things, both moneys and fair words, but Grettir said nay to one and all, and they gat them gone with things in such a stead, and were ill content with their fate; and told the men of the country-side what a wolf had got on to the island.

This took them all unawares, but they could think of nought to do herein; plentifully they talked over it that winter, but could see no rede whereby to get Grettir from the island.

CHAPTER LXXII. Of the Sports at Heron-ness Thing

Now the days wore till such time as men went to the Heron-ness Thing in spring-tide, and many came thronging there from that part of the country, wherefrom men had to go to that Thing for their suits. Men sat there long time both over the suits and over sports, for there were many blithe men in that country-side. But when Grettir heard that all men fared to the Thing, he made a plot with his friends; for he was in goodwill with those who dwelt nighest to him, and for them he spared nought that he could get. But now he said that he would go aland, and gather victuals, but that Illugi and Noise should stay behind. Illugi thought this ill counselled, but let things go as Grettir would.

So Grettir bade them watch the ladders well, for that all things lay thereon; and thereafter he went to the mainland, and got what he deemed needful: he hid himself from men wherso he came, nor did any one know that he was on the land. Withal he heard concerning the Thing, that there was much sport there, and was fain to go thither; so he did on old gear and evil, and thus came to the Thing, whenas men went from the courts home to their booths. Then fell certain young men to talking how that the day was fair and good, and that it were well, belike, for the young men to betake them to wrestling and merrymaking. Folk said it was well counselled; and so men went and sat them down out from the booths.

Now the sons of Thord, Hialti and Thorbiorn Angle, were the chief men in this sport; Thorbiorn Angle was boisterous beyond measure, and drove men hard and fast to the place of the sports, and every man must needs go whereas his will was; and he would take this man and that by the hands and drag him forth unto the playing-ground.

Now first those wrestled who were weakest, and then each man in his turn, and therewith the game and glee waxed great; but when most men had wrestled but those who were the strongest, the bonders fell to talking as to who would be like to lay hand to either of the Thords, who have been aforementioned; but there was no man ready for that. Then the Thords went up to sundry men, and put themselves forward for wrestling, but *the nigher the call the further the man*. Then Thorbiorn Angle looks about, and sees where a man sits, great of growth, and his face hidden somewhat. Thorbiorn laid hold of him, and tugged hard at him, but he sat quiet and moved no whit. Then said Thorbiorn,

"No one has kept his place before me to-day like thou hast; what man art thou?"

He answers, "Guest am I hight."

Said Thorbiorn, "Belike thou wilt do somewhat for our merri-ment; a wished-for guest wilt thou be."

He answered, "About and about, methinks, will things change speedily; nor shall I cast myself into play with you here, where all is unknown to me."

Then many men said he were worthy of good at their hands, if he, an unknown man, gave sport to the people. Then he asked what they would of him; so they prayed him to wrestle with some one.

He said he had left wrestling, "though time agoone it was somewhat of a sport to me."

So, when he did not deny them utterly, they prayed him thereto yet the more.

He said, "Well, if ye are so fain that I be dragged about here, ye must do so much therefor, as to handsel me peace, here at the Thing, and until such time as I come back to my home."

Then they all sprang up and said that so they would do indeed; but Hafr was the name of him who urged most that peace should be given to the man. This Hafr was the son of Thorarin, the son of Hafr, the son of Thord Knob, who had settled land up from the Weir in the Fleets to Tongue-river, and who dwelt at Knobstead; and a wordy man was Hafr.

So now he gave forth the handselling grandly with open mouth, and this is the beginning thereof.

CHAPTER LXXIII. The Handselling of Peace

Says he, "*Herewith I establish peace betwixt all men, but most of all betwixt all men and this same Guest who sits here, and so is named; that is to say, all men of rule, and goodly bonders, and all men young, and fit to bear arms, and all other men of the country-side of Heronness Thing, whencesoever any may have come here, of men named or unnamed. Let us handsel safety and full peace to that unknown new-comer, yclept Guest by name, for game, wrestling, and all glee, for abiding here, and going home, whether he has need to fare over water, or over land, or over ferry; safety shall he have, in all steads named and unnamed, even so long as needs be for his coming home whole, under faith holden. This peace I establish on behoof of us, and of our kin, friends, and men of affinity, women even as men, bondswomen, even as bonds-men, swains and men of estate. Let him be a shamed peace-breaker, who breaks the peace, or spills the troth settled; turned away and driven forth from God, and good men of the kingdom of Heaven, and all Holy ones. A man not to be borne of any man, but cast out from all, as wide as wolves stray, or Christian men make for Churches, or heathen in God's-houses do sacrifice, or fire burns, or earth brings forth, or a child, new-come to speech, calls mother, or mother bears son, or the sons of men kindle fire, or ships sweep on, or shields glitter, or the sun shines, or the snow falls, or a Finn sweeps on skates, or a fir-tree waxes, or a falcon flies the spring-long day with a fair wind under either wing, or the Heavens dwindle far away, or the world is built, or the wind turns waters seaward, or carles sow corn. Let him shun churches, and Christian folk, and heathen men, houses and caves, and every home but the home of Hell. Now shall we be at peace and of one mind each with the other, and of goodwill, whether we meet on fell or foreshore, ship or snow-shoes, earth or ice-mount, sea or swift steed, even as each found his friend on water, or his brother on broad ways; in just such peace one with other, as father with son, or son with father in all dealings together. Now we lay hands together, each and all of us, to hold well this say of peace, and all words spoken in our settled troth: As witness God and good men, and all those who hear my words, and nigh this stead chance to stand."*

CHAPTER LXXIV. Of Grettir's Wrestling: and how Thorbiorn Angle now bought the more part of Drangey

Then many fell to saying that many and great words had been spoken hereon; but now Guest said,

"Good is thy say and well hast thou spoken it; if ye spill not things hereafter, I shall not withhold that which I have to show forth."

So he cast off his hood, and therewith all his outer clothes.

Then they gazed one on the other, and awe spread over their faces, for they deemed they knew surely that this was Grettir Asmundson, for that he was unlike other men for his growth and prowess' sake: and all stood silent, but Hafr deemed he had made himself a fool. Now the men of the country-side fell into twos and twos together, and one upbraided the other, but him the most of all, who had given forth the words of peace.

Then said Grettir; "Make clear to me what ye have in your minds, because for no long time will I sit thus unclad; it is more your matter than mine, whether ye will hold the peace, or hold it not."

They answered few words and then sat down: and now the sons of Thord, and Halldor their brother-in-law, talked the matter over together; and some would hold the peace, and some not; so as they elbowed one another, and laid their heads together. Grettir sang a stave—

I, well known to men, have been
On this morn both hid and seen;
Double face my fortune wears,
Evil now, now good it bears;
Doubtful play-board have I shown
Unto these men, who have grown

Doubtful of their given word;
Hafr's big noise goes overboard.

Then said Tongue-stein, "Thinkest thou that, Grettir? Knowest thou then what the chiefs will make their minds up to? but true it is thou art a man above all others for thy great heart's sake: yea, but dost thou not see how they rub their noses one against the other?"

Then Grettir sang a stave—

Raisers-up of roof of war,
Nose to nose in counsel are;
Wakeners of the shield-rain sit
Wagging beard to talk of it:
Scatterers of the serpent's bed
Round about lay head to head.
For belike they heard my name;
And must balance peace and shame.

Then spake Hialti the son of Thord; "So shall it not be," says he; "we shall hold to our peace and troth given, though we have been beguiled, for I will not that men should have such a deed to follow after, if we depart from that peace, that we ourselves have settled and handselled: Grettir shall go whither he will, and have peace until such time as he comes back from this journey; and then and not till then shall this word of truce be void, whatsoever may befall betwixt us meanwhile."

All thanked him therefor, and deemed that he had done as a great chief, such blood-guilt as there was on the other side: but the speech of Thorbiorn Angle was little and low thereupon.

Now men said that both the Thords should lay hand to Grettir, and he bade them have it as they would: so one of the brothers stood forth; and Grettir stood up stiff before him, and he ran at Grettir at his briskest, but Grettir moved no whit from his place: then Grettir stretched out his hand down Thord's back, over the head of him, and caught hold of him by the breeches, and tripped up his feet, and cast him backward over his head in such wise that he fell on his shoulder, and a mighty fall was that.

Then men said that both those brothers should go against Grettir at once; and thus was it done, and great swinging and pulling about there was, now one side, now the other getting the best of it, though one or other of the brothers Grettir ever had under him; but each in turn must fall on his knee, or have some slip one of the other; and so hard they griped each at each, that they were all blue and bruised.

All men thought this the best of sport, and when they had made an end of it, thanked them for the wrestling; and it was the deeming of those who sat thereby, that the two brothers together were no stronger than Grettir alone, though each of them had the strength of two men of the strongest: so evenly matched they were withal, that neither might get the better of the other if they tried it between them.

Grettir abode no long time at the Thing; the bonders bade him give up the island, but he said nay to this, nor might they do aught herein.

So Grettir fared back to Drangey, and Illugi was as fain of him as might be; and there they abode peacefully, and Grettir told them the story of his doings and his journeys; and thus the summer wore away.

All men deemed that those of Skagafirth had shown great manliness herein, that they held to their peace given; and folk may well mark how trusty men were in those days, whereas Grettir had done such deeds against them.

Now the less rich men of the bonders spake together, that there was little gain to them in holding small shares in Drangey; so they offered to sell their part to the sons of Thord; Hialti said that he would not deal with them herein, for the bonders made it part of the bargain, that he who bought of them should either slay Grettir or get him away. But Thorbiorn Angle said, that he would not spare to take the lead of an onset against Grettir if they would give him wealth therefor. So his brother Hialti gave up to him his share in the island, for that he was the hardest man, and the least befriended of the twain; and in likewise too did other bonders; so Thorbiorn Angle got the more part of the island for little worth, but bound himself withal to get Grettir away.

CHAPTER LXXV. Thorbiorn Angle goes to Drangey to speak with Grettir

Whenas summer was far spent, Thorbiorn Angle went with a well-manned barge out to Drangey, and Grettir and his fellows stood forth on the cliff's edge; so there they talked together. Thorbiorn prayed Grettir to do so much for his word, as to depart from the island; Grettir said there was no hope of such an end.

Then said Thorbiorn, "Belike I may give thee meet aid if thou dost this, for now have many bonders given up to me their shares in the island."

Grettir answered, "Now hast thou shown forth that which brings me to settle in my mind that I will never go hence, whereas thou sayest that thou now hast the more part of the island; and good is it that we twain alone share the kale: for in sooth, hard I found it to have all the men of Skagafirth against me; but now let neither spare the other, for not such are we twain, as are like to be smothered in the friendship of men; and thou mayst leave coming hither, for on my side is all over and done."

"*All things bide their day*," said Thorbiorn, "and an ill day thou bidest."

"I am content to risk it," said Grettir; and in such wise they parted, and Thorbiorn went home.

CHAPTER LXXVI. How Noise let the fire out on Drangey, and how Grettir must needs go aland for more

So the tale tells, that by then they had been two winters on Drangey, they had slaughtered well-nigh all the sheep that were there, but one ram, as men say, they let live; he was piebald of belly and head, and exceeding big-horned; great game they had of him, for he was so wise that he would stand waiting without, and run after them whereso they went; and he would come home to the hut anights and rub his horns against the door.

Now they deemed it good to abide on the island, for food was plenty, because of the fowl and their eggs; but firewood was right hard to come by; and ever Grettir would let the thrall go watch for drift, and logs were often drifted there, and he would bear them to the fire; but no need had the brothers to do any work beyond climbing into the cliffs when it liked them. But the thrall took to loathing his work, and got more grumbling and heedless than he was wont heretofore: his part it was to watch the fire night by night, and Grettir gave him good warning thereon, for no boat they had with them.

Now so it befell that on a certain night their fire went out; Grettir was wroth thereat, and said it was but his due if Noise were beaten for that deed; but the thrall said that his life was an evil life, if he must lie there in outlawry, and be shaken and beaten withal if aught went amiss.

Grettir asked Illugi what rede there was for the matter, but he said he could see none, but that they should abide there till some keel should be brought thither: Grettir said it was but blindness to hope for that. "Rather will I risk whether I may not come aland."

"Much my mind misgives me thereof," said Illugi, "for we are all lost if thou comest to any ill."

"I shall not be swallowed up swimming," said Grettir; "but henceforward I shall trust the thrall the worse for this, so much as lies hereon."

Now the shortest way to the mainland from the island, was a sea-mile long.

CHAPTER LXXVII. Grettir at the home-stead of Reeks

Now Grettir got all ready for swimming, and had on a cowl of market-wadmal, and his breeches girt about him, and he got his fingers webbed together, and the weather was fair. So he went from the island late in the day, and desperate Illugi deemed his journey. Grettir made out into the bay, and the stream was with him, and a calm was over all. He swam on fast, and came aland at Reekness by then the sun had set: he went up to the homestead at Reeks, and into a bath that night, and then went into the chamber; it was very warm there, for there had been a fire therein that

evening, and the heat was not yet out of the place; but he was exceeding weary, and there fell into a deep sleep, and so lay till far on into the next day.

Now as the morning wore the home folk arose, and two women came into the chamber, a handmaid and the goodman's daughter. Grettir was asleep, and the bed-clothes had been cast off him on to the floor; so they saw that a man lay there, and knew him.

Then said the handmaiden: "So may I thrive, sister! here is Grettir Asmundson lying bare, and I call him right well ribbed about the chest, but few might think he would be so small of growth below; and so then that does not go along with other kinds of bigness."

The goodman's daughter answered: "Why wilt thou have everything on thy tongue's end? Thou art a measure-less fool; be still."

"Dear sister, how can I be still about it?" says the handmaid. "I would not have believed it, though one had told me."

And now she would whiles run up to him and look, and whiles run back again to the goodman's daughter, screaming and laughing; but Grettir heard what she said, and as she ran in over the floor by him he caught hold of her, and sang this stave—

Stay a little, foolish one!
When the shield-shower is all done,
With the conquered carles and lords,
Men bide not to measure swords:
Many a man had there been glad,
Lesser war-gear to have had.
With a heart more void of fear;
Such I am not, sweet and dear.

Therewithal he swept her up into the bed, but the bonder's daughter ran out of the place; then sang Grettir this other stave—

Sweet amender of the seam,
Weak and worn thou dost me deem:
O light-handed dear delight,
Certes thou must say aright.
Weak I am, and certainly
Long in white arms must I lie:
Hast thou heart to leave me then,
Fair-limbed gladdener of great men?

The handmaid shrieked out, but in such wise did they part that she laid no blame on Grettir when all was over.

A little after, Grettir arose, and went to Thorvald the goodman, and told him of his trouble, and prayed bring him out; so did he, and lent him a boat, and brought him out, and Grettir thanked him well for his manliness.

But when it was heard that Grettir had swam a sea-mile, all deemed his prowess both on sea and land to be marvellous.

Those of Skagafirth had many words to say against Thorbiorn Angle, in that he drave not Grettir away from Drangey, and said they would take back each his own share; but he said he found the task no easy one, and prayed them be good to him, and abide awhile.

CHAPTER LXXVIII. Of Haring at Drangey, and the end of him

That same summer a ship came to the Gangpass-mouth, and therein was a man called Haering—a young man he was, and so lithe that there was no cliff that he might not climb. He went to dwell with Thorbiorn Angle, and was there on into the autumn; and he was ever urging Thorbiorn to go to Drangey, saying that he would fain see whether the cliffs were so high that none might come up them. Thorbiorn said that he should not work for nought if he got up into the island, and slew Grettir, or gave him some wound; and withal he made it worth coveting to Haering. So they fared to Drangey, and set the eastman ashore in a certain place, and he was to set on them unawares if he might come up on to the island, but they laid their keel by the ladders, and fell to talking with Grettir; and Thorbiorn asked him if he were minded now to leave the place; but he said that to nought was his mind so made up as to stay there.

"A great game hast thou played with us," said Thorbiorn; "but thou seemest not much afraid for thyself."

Thus a long while they gave and took in words, and came no-wise together hereon.

But of Haering it is to be told that he climbed the cliffs, going on the right hand and the left, and got up by such a road as no man has gone by before or since; but when he came to the top of the cliff, he saw where the brothers stood, with their backs turned toward him, and thought in a little space to win both goods and great fame; nor were they at all aware of his ways, for they deemed that no man might come up, but there whereas the ladders were. Grettir was talking with Thorbiorn, nor lacked there words of the biggest on either side; but withal Illugi chanced to look aside, and saw a man drawing anigh them.

Then he said, "Here comes a man at us, with axe raised aloft, and in right warlike wise he seems to fare."

"Turn thou to meet him," says Grettir, "but I will watch the ladders."

So Illugi turned to meet Haering, and when the eastman saw him, he turned and fled here and there over the island. Illugi chased him while the island lasted, but when he came forth on to the cliff's edge Haering leapt down thence, and every bone in him was broken, and so ended his life; but the place where he was lost has been called Haering's-leap ever since.

Illugi came back, and Grettir asked how he had parted from this one who had doomed them to die.

"He would have nought to do," says Illugi, "with my seeing after his affairs, but must needs break his neck over the rock; so let the bonders pray for him as one dead."

So when Angle heard that, he bade his folk make off. "Twice have I fared to meet Grettir, but no third time will I go, if I am nought the wiser first; and now belike they may sit in Drangey as for me; but in my mind it is, that Grettir will abide here but a lesser time than heretofore."

With that they went home, and men deemed this journey of theirs worser than the first, and Grettir abode that winter in Drangey, nor in that season did he and Thorbiorn meet again.

In those days died Skapti Thorodson the Lawman, and great scathe was that to Grettir, for he had promised to busy himself about his acquittal as soon as he had been twenty winters in outlawry, and this year, of which the tale was told e'en now, was the nineteenth year thereof.

In the spring died Snorri the Godi, and many matters befell in that season that come not into this story.

CHAPTER LXXIX. Of the Talk at the Thing about Grettir's Outlawry

That summer, at the Althing, the kin of Grettir spake many things concerning his outlawry, and some deemed he had outworn the years thereof, if he had come at all into the twentieth year; but they who had blood-suits against him would not have it so, and said, that he had done many an outlaw's deed since he was first outlawed, and deemed his time ought to last longer therefor.

At that time was a new lawman made, Stein, the son of Thorgest, the son of Stein the Far-sailing, the son of Thorir Autumn-mirk; the mother of Stein was Arnora, the daughter of Thord the Yeller; and Stein was a wise man.

Now was he prayed for the word of decision; and he bade them search and see whether this were the twentieth summer since Grettir was made an outlaw, and thus it seemed to be.

But then stood forth Thorir of Garth, and brought all into dispute again, for he found that Grettir had been one winter out here a sackless man, amidst the times of his outlawry, and then nineteen were the winters of his outlawry found to be. Then said the lawman that no one should be longer in outlawry than twenty winters in all, though he had done outlaw's deeds in that time.

"But before that, I declare no man sackless."

Now because of this was the acquittal delayed for this time, but it was thought a sure thing that he would be made sackless the next summer. But that misliked the Skagafirthers exceeding ill, if Grettir were to come out of his outlawry, and they bade Thorbiorn Angle do one of two things, either give back the island or slay Grettir; but he deemed well that he had a work on his hands, for he saw no rede for the winning of Grettir, and yet was he fain to hold the island; and so all manner of craft he sought for the overcoming

of Grettir, if he might prevail either by guile or hardihood, or in any wise soever.

CHAPTER LXXX. Thorbiorn Angle goes with his Foster-mother out to Drangey

Thorbiorn Angle had a foster-mother, Thurid by name, exceeding old, and meet for little, as folk deemed, very cunning she had been in many and great matters of lore, when she was young, and men were yet heathen; but men thought of her as of one, who had lost all that. But now, though Christ's law were established in the land, yet abode still many sparks of heathendom. It had been law in the land, that men were not forbidden to sacrifice secretly, or deal with other lore of eld, but it was lesser outlawry if such doings oozed out. Now in such wise it fared with many, that *hand for wont did yearn*, and things grew handiest by time that had been learned in youth.

So now, whenas Thorbiorn Angle was empty of all plots, he sought for help there, whereas most folk deemed it most unlike that help was—at the hands of his foster-mother, in sooth, and asked, what counsel was in her therefor.

She answered, "Now belike matters have come to this, even as the saw says—*To the goat-house for wool*: but what could I do less than this, to think myself before folk of the country-side, but be a man of nought, whenso anything came to be tried? nor see I how I may fare worse than thou, though I may scarce rise from my bed. But if thou art to have my rede, then shall I have my will as to how and what things are done."

He gave his assent thereto, and said that she had long been of wholesome counsel to him.

Now the time wore on to Twainmonth of summer; and one fair-weather day the carline spake to Angle,

"Now is the weather calm and bright, and I will now that thou fare to Drangey and pick a quarrel with Grettir; I shall go with thee, and watch how heedful he may be of his words; and if I see them, I shall have some sure token as to how far they are befriended of fortune, and then shall I speak over them such words as seem good to me."

Angle answered, "Loth am I to be faring to Drangey, for ever am I of worser mind when I depart thence than when I come thereto."

Then said the carline, "Nought will I do for thee if thou sufferest me to rule in no wise."

"Nay, so shall it not be, foster-mother," said he; "but so much have I said, as that I would so come thither the third time that somewhat should be made of the matter betwixt us."

"The chance of that must be taken," said the carline "and many a heavy labour must thou have, or ever Grettir be laid to earth; and oft will it be doubtful to thee what fortune thine shall be, and heavy troubles wilt thou get therefrom when that is done; yet art thou so bounden here-under, that to somewhat must thou make up thy mind."

Thereafter Thorbiorn Angle let put forth a ten-oared boat, and he went thereon with eleven men, and the carline was in their company.

So they fell to rowing as the weather went, out to Drangey; and when the brothers saw that, they stood forth at the ladders, and they began to talk the matter over yet once more; and Thorbiorn said, that he was come yet again, to talk anew of their leaving the island, and that he would deal lightly with his loss of money and Grettir's dwelling there, if so be they might part without harm. But Grettir said that he had no words to make atwixt and atween of his going thence.

"Oft have I so said," says he, "and no need there is for thee to talk to me thereon; ye must even do as ye will, but here will I abide, whatso may come to hand."

Now Thorbiorn deemed, that this time also his errand was come to nought, and he said,

"Yea, I deemed I knew with what men of hell I had to do; and most like it is that a day or two will pass away ere I come hither again."

"I account that not in the number of my griefs, though thou never comest back," said Grettir.

Now the carline lay in the stern, with clothes heaped up about and over her, and with that she moved, and said,

"Brave will these men be, and luckless withal; far hast thou outdone them in manliness; thou biddest them choice of many goodly things, but they say nay to all, and few things lead surer to ill, than not to know how to take good. Now this I cast over thee, Grettir, that thou be left of all health, wealth, and good-hap, all good heed and wisdom: yea, and that the more, the longer thou livest; good hope I have, Grettir, that thy days of gladness shall be fewer here in time to come than in the time gone by."

Now when Grettir heard these words, he was astonished withal, and said, "What fiend is there in the boat with them?"

"Illugi answers, "I deem that it will be the carline, Thorbiorn's foster-mother."

"Curses on the witch-wight!" says Grettir, "nought worse could have been looked for; at no words have I shuddered like as I shuddered at those words she spake; and well I wot that from her, and her foul cunning, some evil will be brought on us; yet shall she have some token to mind her that she has sought us here."

Therewithal he caught up a marvellous great stone, and cast it down on to the boat, and it smote that clothes-heap; and a longer stone-throw was that than Thorbiorn deemed any man might make; but therewithal a great shriek arose, for the stone had smitten the carline's thigh, and broken it.

Then said Illugi, "I would thou hadst not done that!"

"Blame me not therefor," said Grettir, "I fear me the stroke has been too little, for certes not overmuch weregild were paid for the twain of us, though the price should be one carline's life."

"Must she alone be paid?" said Illugi, "little enough then will be laid down for us twain."

Now Thorbiorn got him gone homeward, with no greetings at parting. But he said to the carline,

"Now have matters gone as I thought, that a journey of little glory thou shouldst make to the island; thou hast got maimed, and honour is no nigher to us than before, yea, we must have bootless shame on bootless shame."

She answered, "This will be the springing of ill-hap to them; and I deem that henceforth they are on the wane; neither do I fear if I live, but that I shall have revenge for this deed they have thus done me."

"Stiff is thine heart, meseems, foster-mother," said Thorbiorn. With that they came home, but the carline was laid in her bed, and abode there nigh a month; by then was the hurt thigh-bone grown together again, and she began to be afoot once more.

Great laughter men made at that journey of Thorbiorn and the carline, and deemed he had been often enow out-played in his dealings with Grettir: first, at the Spring-Thing in the peace hand-selling; next, when Haering was lost, and now again, this third time, when the carline's thigh-bone was broken, and no stroke had been played against these from his part. But great shame and grief had Thorbiorn Angle from all these words.

CHAPTER LXXXI. Of the Carline's evil Gift to Grettir

Now wore away the time of autumn till it wanted but three weeks of winter; then the carline bade bear her to the sea-shore. Thorbiorn asked what she would there.

"Little is my errand, yet maybe," she says, "it is a foreboding of greater tidings."

Now was it done as she bade, and when she came down to the strand, she went limping along by the sea, as if she were led thereto, unto a place where lay before her an uprooted tree, as big as a man might bear on his shoulder. She looked at the tree and bade them turn it over before her eyes, and on one side it was as if singed and rubbed; so there whereas it was rubbed she let cut a little flat space; and then she took her knife and cut runes on the root, and made them red with her blood, and sang witch-words over them; then she went backwards and widdershins round about the tree, and cast over it many a strong spell; thereafter she let thrust the tree forth into the sea, and spake in such wise over it, that it should drive out to Drangey, and that Grettir should have all hurt therefrom that might be. Thereafter she went back home

to Woodwick; and Thorbiorn said that he knew not if that would come to aught; but the carline answered that he should wot better anon.

Now the wind blew landward up the firth, yet the carline's root went in the teeth of the wind, and belike it sailed swifter than might have been looked for of it.

Grettir abode in Drangey with his fellows as is aforesaid, and in good case they were; but the day after the carline had wrought her witch-craft on the tree the brothers went down below the cliffs searching for firewood, so when they came to the west of the island, there they found that tree drifted ashore.

Then said Illugi, "A big log of firewood, kinsman, let us bear it home."

Grettir kicked it with his foot and said, "An evil tree from evil sent; other firewood than this shall we have."

Therewithal he cast it out into the sea, and bade Illugi beware of bearing it home, "For it is sent us for our ill-hap." And therewith they went unto their abode, and said nought about it to the thrall. But the next day they found the tree again, and it was nigher to the ladders than heretofore; Grettir drave it out to sea, and said that it should never be borne home.

Now the days wore on into summer, and a gale came on with much wet, and the brothers were loth to be abroad, and bade Noise go search for firewood.

He took it ill, and said he was ill served in that he had to drudge and labour abroad in all the foulest weather; but withal he went down to the beach before the ladders and found the carline's tree there, and deemed things had gone well because of it; so he took it up and bore it to the hut, and cast it down thereby with a mighty thump.

Grettir heard it and said, "Noise has got something, so I shall go out and see what it is."

Therewithal he took up a wood-axe, and went out, and straight-way Noise said,

"Split it up in as good wise as I have brought it home, then."

Grettir grew short of temper with the thrall, and smote the axe with both hands at the log, nor heeded what tree it was; but as soon as ever the axe touched the wood, it turned flatlings and glanced off therefrom into Grettir's right leg above the knee, in such wise that it stood in the bone, and a great wound was that. Then he looked at the tree and said,

"Now has evil heart prevailed, nor will this hap go alone, since that same tree has now come back to us that I have cast out to sea on these two days. But for thee, Noise, two slips hast thou had, first, when thou must needs let the fire be slaked, and now this bearing home of that tree of ill-hap; but if a third thou hast, thy bane will it be, and the bane of us all."

With that came Illugi and bound up Grettir's hurt, and it bled little, and Grettir slept well that night; and so three nights slipped by in such wise that no pain came of the wound, and when they loosed the swathings, the lips of the wound were come together so that it was well-nigh grown over again. Then said Illugi,

"Belike thou wilt have no long hurt of this wound."

"Well were it then," said Grettir, "but marvellously has this befallen, whatso may come of it; and my mind misgives me of the way things will take."

CHAPTER LXXXII. Grettir sings of his Great Deeds

Now they lay them down that evening, but at midnight Grettir began to tumble about exceedingly. Illugi asked why he was so unquiet. Grettir said that his leg had taken to paining him, "And methinks it is like that some change of hue there be therein."

Then they kindled a light, and when the swathings were undone, the leg showed all swollen and coal-blue, and the wound had broken open, and was far more evil of aspect than at first; much pain there went therewith so that he might not abide at rest in any wise, and never came sleep on his eyes.

Then spake Grettir, "Let us make up our minds to it, that this sickness which I have gotten is not done for nought, for it is of sorcery, and the carline is minded to avenge her of that stone."

Illugi said, "Yea, I told thee that thou wouldst get no good from that hag."

"*All will come to one end*," said Grettir, and sang this song withal—

Doubtful played the foredoomed fate
Round the sword in that debate,
When the bearserks' outlawed crew,
In the days of yore I slew.
Screamed the worm of clashing lands
When Hiarandi dropped his hands
Biorn and Gunnar cast away,
Hope of dwelling in the day.
"Home again then travelled I;
The broad-boarded ship must lie,
Under Door-holm, as I went,
Still with weapon play content,
Through the land; and there the thane
Called me to the iron rain,
Bade me make the spear-storm rise,
Torfi Vebrandson the wise.
"To such plight the Skald was brought,
Wounder of the walls of thought,
Howsoever many men
Stood, all armed, about us then,
That his hand that knew the oar,
Grip of sword might touch no more;
Yet to me the wound who gave
Did he give a horse to have.
"Thorbiorn Arnor's son, men said,
Of no great deed was afraid,
Folk spake of him far and wide;
He forbade me to abide
Longer on the lovely earth;
Yet his heart was little worth,
Not more safe alone was I,
Than when armed he drew anigh.
"From the sword's edge and the spears
From my many waylayers,
While might was, and my good day,
Often did I snatch away;
Now a hag, whose life outworn
Wicked craft and ill hath borne,
Meet for death lives long enow,
Grettir's might to overthrow.

"Now must we take good heed to ourselves," said Grettir, "for Thorbiorn Angle must be minded that this hap shall not go alone; and I will, Noise, that thou watch the ladders every day from this time forth, but pull them up in the evening, and see thou do it well and truly, even as though much lay thereon, but if thou bewrayest us, short will be thy road to ill."

So Noise promised great things concerning this. Now the weather grew harder, and a north-east wind came on with great cold: every night Grettir asked if the ladders were drawn up.

Then said Noise, "Yea, certainly! men are above all things to be looked for now. Can any man have such a mind to take thy life, that he will do so much as to slay himself therefor? for this gale is far other than fair; lo now, methinks thy so great bravery and hardihood has come utterly to an end, if thou must needs think that all things soever will be thy bane."

"Worse wilt thou bear thyself than either of us," said Grettir, "when the need is on us; but now go watch the ladders, whatsoever will thou hast thereto."

So every morning they drave him out, and ill he bore it.

But Grettir's hurt waxed in such wise that all the leg swelled up, and the thigh began to gather matter both above and below, and the lips of the wound were all turned out, so that Grettir's death was looked for.

Illugi sat over him night and day, and took heed to nought else, and by then it was the second week since Grettir hurt himself.

CHAPTER LXXXIII. How Thorbiorn Angle gathered Force and set Sail for Drangey.

Thorbiorn Angle sat this while at home at Woodwick, and was ill-content in that he might not win Grettir; but when a certain space had passed since the carline had put the sorcery into the root, she comes to talk with Thorbiorn, and asks if he were not minded to go see Grettir. He answers, that to nought was his mind so made up as that he would not go; "perchance thou wilt go meet him, foster-mother," says Thorbiorn.

"Nay, I shall not go meet-him," says the carline; "but I have sent my greeting to him, and some hope I have that it has come home to him; and good it seems to me that thou go speedily to meet him, or else shalt thou never have such good hap as to overcome him."

Thorbiorn answered: "So many shameful journeys have I made thither, that there I go not ever again; moreover that alone is full enough to stay me, that such foul weather it is, that it is safe to go nowhither, whatso the need may be."

She answered: "Ill counselled thou art, not to see how to overcome herein. Now yet once again will I lay down a rede for this; go thou first and get thee strength of men, and ride to Hof to Halldor thy brother-in-law, and take counsel of him. But if I may rule in some way how Grettir's health goes, how shall it be said that it is past hope that I may also deal with the gale that has been veering about this while?"

Thorbiorn deemed it might well be that the carline saw further than he had thought she might, and straightway sent up into the country-side for men; but speedy answer there came that none of those who had given up their shares would do aught to ease his task, and they said that Thorbiorn should have to himself both the owning of the island and the onset on Grettir. But Tongue-Stein gave him two of his followers, and Hialti, his brother, sent him three men, and Eric of God-dales one, and from his own home-stead he had six. So the twelve of them ride from Woodwick out to Hof. Halldor bade them abide there, and asked their errand; then Thorbiorn told it as clearly as might be. Halldor asked whose rede this might be, and Thorbiorn said that his foster-mother urged him much thereto.

"That will bear no good," said Halldor, "because she is cunning in sorcery, and such-like things are now forbidden."

"I may not look closely into all these matters before-hand," said Thorbiorn, "but in somewise or other shall this thing have an end if I may have my will. Now, how shall I go about it, so that I may come to the island?"

"Meseems," says Halldor, "that thou trustest in somewhat, though I wot not how good that may be. But now if thou wilt go forward with it, go thou out to Meadness in the Fleets to Biorn my friend; a good keel he has, so tell him of my word, that I would he should lend you the craft, and thence ye may sail out to Drangey. But the end of your journey I see not, if Grettir is sound and hale: yea, and be thou sure that if ye win him not in manly wise, he leaves enough of folk behind to take up the blood-suit after him. And slay not Illugi if ye may do otherwise. But methinks I see that all is not according to Christ's law in these redes."

Then Halldor gave them six men withal for their journey; one was called Karr, another Thorleif, and a third Brand, but the rest are not named.

So they fared thence, eighteen in company, out to the Fleets, and came to Meadness and gave Biorn Halldor's message, he said that it was but due for Halldor's sake, but that he owed nought to Thorbiorn; withal it seemed to him that they went on a mad journey, and he let them from it all he might.

They said they might not turn back, and so went down to the sea, and put forth the craft, and all its gear was in the boat-stand hard by; so they made them ready for sailing, and foul enow the weather seemed to all who stood on land. But they hoisted sail, and the craft shot swiftly far into the firth, but when they came out into the main part thereof into deep water, the wind abated in such wise that they deemed it blew none too hard.

So in the evening at dusk they came to Drangey.

CHAPTER LXXXIV. The Slaying of Grettir Asmundson

Now it is to be told, that Grettir was so sick, that he might not stand on his feet, but Illugi sat beside him, and Noise was to keep watch and ward; and many words he had against that, and said that they would still think that life was falling from them, though nought had happened to bring it about; so he went out from their abode right unwillingly, and when he came to the ladders he spake to himself and said that now he would not draw them up; withal he grew exceeding sleepy, and lay down and slept all day long, and right on till Thorbiorn came to the island.

So now they see that the ladders are not drawn up; then spake Thorbiorn, "Now are things changed from what the wont was, in that there are none afoot, and their ladder stands in its place withal; maybe more things will betide in this our journey than we had thought of in the beginning; but now let us hasten to the hut, and let no man lack courage; for, wot this well, that if these men are hale, each one of us must needs do his best."

Then they went up on to the island, and looked round about, and saw where a man lay a little space off the landing-place, and snored hard and fast. Therewith Thorbiorn knew Noise, and went up to him and drave the hilt of his sword against the ear of him, and bade him, "Wake up, beast! certes in evil stead is he who trusts his life to thy faith and troth."

Noise looked up thereat and said, "Ah! now are they minded to go on according to their wont; do ye, may-happen, think my freedom too great, though I lie out here in the cold?"

"Art thou witless," said Angle, "that thou seest not that thy foes are come upon thee, and will slay you all?"

Then Noise answered nought, but yelled out all he might, when he knew the men who they were.

"Do one thing or other," says Angle, "either hold thy peace forthwith, and tell us of your abode, or else be slain of us."

Thereat was Noise as silent as if he had been thrust under water; but Thorbiorn said, "Are they at their hut, those brothers? Why are they not afoot?"

"Scarce might that be," said Noise, "for Grettir is sick and come nigh to his death, and Illugi sits over him."

Then Angle asked how it was with their health, and what things had befallen. So Noise told him in what wise Grettir's hurt had come about.

Then Angle laughed and said, "Yea, sooth is the old saw, *Old friends are the last to sever*; and this withal, *Ill if a thrall is thine only friend*, whereso thou art, Noise; for shamefully hast thou bewrayed thy master, albeit he was nought good."

Then many laid evil things to his charge for his ill faith, and beat him till he was well-nigh past booting for, and let him lie there; but they went up to the hut and smote mightily on the door.

"Pied-belly is knocking hard at the door, brother," says Illugi.

"Yea, yea, hard, and over hard," says Grettir; and therewithal the door brake asunder.

Then sprang Illugi to his weapons and guarded the door, in such wise that there was no getting in for them. Long time they set on him there, and could bring nought against him save spear-thrusts, and still Illugi smote all the spear-heads from the shafts. But when they saw that they might thus bring nought to pass, they leapt up on to the roof of the hut, and tore off the thatch; then Grettir got to his feet and caught up a spear, and thrust out betwixt the rafters; but before that stroke was Karr, a home-man of Halldor of Hof, and forthwithal it pierced him through.

Then spoke Angle, and bade men fare warily and guard themselves well, "for we may prevail against them if we follow wary redes."

So they tore away the thatch from the ends of the ridge-beam, and bore on the beam till it brake asunder.

Now Grettir might not rise from his knee, but he caught up the short-sword, Karr's-loom, and even therewith down leapt those men in betwixt the walls, and a hard fray befell betwixt them. Grettir smote with the short-sword at Vikar, one of the followers of Hialti Thordson, and caught him on the left shoulder, even as he leapt in betwixt the walls, and cleft him athwart the shoulder down unto the right side, so that the man fell asunder, and the body so smitten atwain tumbled over on to Grettir, and for that cause he might not heave aloft the short-sword as speedily as he would, and therewith Thorbiorn Angle thrust him betwixt the shoulders, and great was that wound he gave.

Then cried Grettir, "*Bare is the back of the brotherless*." And Illugi threw his shield over Grettir, and warded him in so stout a wise that all men praised his defence.

Then said Grettir to Angle, "Who then showed thee the way here to the island?"

Said Angle, "The Lord Christ showed it us."

"Nay," said Grettir, "but I guess that the accursed hag, thy foster-mother, showed it thee, for in her redes must thou needs have trusted."

"All shall be one to thee now," said Angle, "in whomsoever I have put my trust."

Then they set on them fiercely, and Illugi made defence for both in most manly wise; but Grettir was utterly unmeet for fight, both for his wounds' sake and for his sickness. So Angle bade bear down Illugi with shields, "For never have I met his like, amongst men of such age."

Now thus they did, besetting him with beams and weapons till he might ward himself no longer; and then they laid hands on him, and so held him fast. But he had given some wound or other to the more part of those who had been at the onset, and had slain outright three of Angle's fellows.

Thereafter they went up to Grettir, but he was fallen forward on to his face, and no defence there was of him, for that he was already come to death's door by reason of the hurt in his leg, for all the thigh was one sore, even up to the small guts; but there they gave him many a wound, yet little or nought he bled.

So when they thought he was dead, Angle laid hold of the short-sword, and said that he had carried it long enough; but Grettir's fingers yet kept fast hold of the grip thereof, nor could the short-sword be loosened; many went up and tried at it, but could get nothing done therewith; eight of them were about it before the end, but none the more might bring it to pass.

Then said Angle, "Why should we spare this wood-man here? lay his hand on the block."

So when that was done they smote off his hand at the wrist, and the fingers straightened, and were loosed from the handle. Then Angle took the short-sword in both hands and smote at Grettir's head, and a right great stroke that was, so that the short-sword might not abide it, and a shard was broken from the midst of the edge thereof; and when men saw that, they asked why he must needs spoil a fair thing in such wise.

But Angle answered, "More easy is it to know that weapon now if it should be asked for."

They said it needed not such a deed since the man was dead already.

"Ah! but yet more shall be done," said Angle, and hewed therewith twice or thrice at Grettir's neck, or ever the head came off; and then he spake,

"Now know I for sure that Grettir is dead."

In such wise Grettir lost his life, the bravest man of all who have dwelt in Iceland; he lacked but one winter of forty-five years whenas he was slain; but he was fourteen winters old when he slew Skeggi, his first man-slaying; and from thenceforth all things turned to his fame, till the time when he dealt with Glam, the Thrall; and in those days was he of twenty winters-; but when he fell into outlawry, he was twenty-five years old; but in outlawry was he high nineteen winters, and full oft was he the while in great trials of men; and such as his life was, and his needs, he held well to his faith and troth, and most haps did he foresee, though he might do nought to meet them.

CHAPTER LXXXV. How Thorbiorn Angle claimed Grettir's Head-money.

"A great champion have we laid to earth here," said Thorbiorn; "now shall we bring the head aland with us, for I will not lose the money which has been laid thereon; nor may they then feign that they know not if I have slain Grettir."

They bade him do his will, but had few words to say hereon, for to all the deed seemed a deed of little prowess.

Then Angle fell to speaking with Illugi,

"Great scathe it is of such a brave man as thou art, that thou hast fallen to such folly, as to betake thee to ill deeds with this outlaw here, and must needs lie slain and unatoned therefore."

Illugi answered, "Then first when the Althing is over this summer, wilt thou know who are outlaws; but neither thou nor the carline, thy foster-mother, will judge in this matter, because that your sorcery and craft of old days have slain Grettir, though thou didst, indeed, bear steel against him, as he lay at death's door, and

wrought that so great coward's deed there, over and above thy sorcery."

Then said Angle, "In manly wise speakest thou, but not thus will it be; and I will show thee that I think great scathe in thy death, for thy life will I give thee if thou wilt swear an oath for us here, to avenge thyself on none of those who have been in this journey."

Illugi said, "That might I have deemed a thing to talk about, if Grettir had been suffered to defend himself, and ye had won him with manliness and hardihood; but now nowise is it to be thought, that I will do so much for the keeping of my life, as to become base, even as thou art: and here I tell thee, once for all, that no one of men shall be of less gain to thee than I, if I live; for long will it be or ever I forget how ye have prevailed against Grettir.—Yea, much rather do I choose to die."

Then Thorbiorn Angle held talk with his fellows, whether they should let Illugi live or not; they said that, whereas he had ruled the journey, so should he rule the deeds; so Angle said that he knew not how to have that man hanging over his head, who would neither give troth, nor promise aught.

But when Illugi knew that they were fully minded to slay him, he laughed, and spake thus,

"Yea, now have your counsels sped, even as my heart would."

So at the dawning of the day they brought him to the eastern end of the island, and there slaughtered him; but all men praised his great heart, and deemed him unlike to any of his age.

They laid both the brothers in cairn on the island there; and thereafter took Grettir's head, and bore it away with them, and whatso goods there were in weapons or clothes; but the good short-sword Angle would not put into the things to be shared, and he bare it himself long afterwards. Noise they took with them, and he bore himself as ill as might be.

At nightfall the gale abated, and they rowed aland in the morning. Angle took land at the handiest place, and sent the craft out to Biorn; but by then they were come hard by Oyce-land, Noise began to bear himself so ill, that they were loth to fare any longer with him, so there they slew him, and long and loud he greeted or ever he was cut down.

Thorbiorn Angle went home to Woodwick, and deemed he had done in manly wise in this journey; but Grettir's head they laid in salt in the out-bower at Woodwick, which was called therefrom Grettir's-bower; and there it lay the winter long. But Angle was exceeding ill thought of for this work of his, as soon as folk knew that Grettir had been overcome by sorcery.

Thorbiorn Angle sat quiet till past Yule; then he rode to meet Thorir of Garth, and told him of these slayings; and this withal, that he deemed that money his due which had been put on Grettir's head. Thorir said that he might not hide that he had brought about Grettir's outlawry,

"Yea, and oft have I dealt hardly with him, yet so much for the taking of his life I would not have done, as to make me a misdoer, a man of evil craft, even as thou hast done; and the less shall I lay down that money for thee, in that I deem thee surely to be a man of forfeit life because of thy sorcery and wizard-craft."

Thorbiorn Angle answers, "Meseems thou art urged hereto more by closefistedness and a poor mind, than by any heed of how Grettir was won."

Thorir said that a short way they might make of it, in that they should abide the Althing, and take whatso the Lawman might deem most rightful: and in such wise they parted that there was no little ill-will betwixt Thorir and Thorbiorn Angle.

CHAPTER LXXXVI. How Thorbiorn Angle brought Grettir's Head to Biarg

The kin of Grettir and Illugi were exceeding ill-content when they heard of these slayings, and they so looked on matters as deeming that Angle had wrought a shameful deed in slaying a man at death's door; and that, besides that, he had become guilty of sorcery. They sought the counsel of the wisest men, and everywhere was Angle's work ill spoken of. As for him, he rode to Midfirth, when it lacked four weeks of summer; and when his ways were heard of, Asdis gathered men to her, and there came

many of her friends: Gamli and Glum, her brothers-in-law, and their sons, Skeggi, who was called the Short-handed, and Uspak, who is aforesaid. Asdis was so well befriended, that all the Midfirthers came to aid her; yea, even those who were aforetime foes to Grettir; and the first man there was Thorod Drapa-Stump, and the more part of the Ramfirthers.

Now Angle came to Biarg with twenty men, and had Grettir's head with him; but not all those had come yet who had promised aid to Asdis; so Angle and his folk went into the chamber with the head, and set it down on the floor; the goodwife was there in the chamber, and many men with her; nor did it come to greetings on either side; but Angle sang this stave—

A greedy head I bring with me
Up from the borders of the sea;
Now may the needle-pliers weep,
The red-haired outlaw lies asleep;
Gold-bearer, cast adown thine eyes,
And see how on the pavement lies,
The peace-destroying head brought low,
That but for salt had gone ere now.

The goodwife sat silent when he gave forth the stave, and thereafter she sang—

O thou poor wretch, as sheep that flee
To treacherous ice when wolves they see,
So in the waves would ye have drowned
Your shame and fear, had ye but found
That steel-god hale upon the isle:
Now heavy shame, woe worth the while!
Hangs over the north country-side,
Nor I my loathing care to hide.

Then many said that it was nought wonderful, though she had brave sons, so brave as she herself was, amid such grief of heart as was brought on her.

Uspak was without, and held talk with such of Angle's folk as had not gone in, and asked concerning the slayings; and all men praised Illugi's defence; and they told withal how fast Grettir had held the short-sword after he was dead, and marvellous that seemed to men.

Amidst these things were seen many men riding from the west, and thither were coming many friends of the goodwife, with Gamli and Skeggi west from Meals.

Now Angle had been minded to take out execution after Illugi, for he and his men claimed all his goods; but when that crowd of men came up, Angle saw that he might do nought therein, but Gamli and Uspak were of the eagerest, and were fain to set on Angle; but those who were wisest bade them take the rede of Thorwald their kinsman, and the other chief men, and said that worse would be deemed of Angle's case the more wise men sat in judgment over it; then such truce there was that Angle rode away, having Grettir's head with him, because he was minded to bear it to the Althing.

So he rode home, and thought matters looked heavy enough, because well-nigh all the chief men of the land were either akin to Grettir and Illugi, or tied to them and theirs by marriage: that summer, moreover, Skeggi the Short-handed took to wife the daughter of Thorod Drapa-Stump, and therewithal Thorod joined Grettir's kin in these matters.

CHAPTER LXXXVII. Affairs at the Althing

Now men rode to the Althing, and Angle's helpers were fewer than he had looked for, because that his case was spoken ill of far and wide.

Then asked Halldor whether they were to carry Grettir's head with them to the Althing.

Angle said that he would bear it with him.

"Ill-counselled is that," said Halldor; "for many enough will thy foes be, though thou doest nought to jog the memories of folk, or wake up their grief."

By then were they come on their way, and were minded to ride south over the Sand; so Angle let take the head, and bury it in a hillock of sand, which is called Grettir's Hillock.

Thronged was the Althing, and Angle put forth his case, and praised his own deeds mightily, in that he had slain the greatest outlaw in all the land, and claimed the money as his, which had

been put on Grettir's head. But Thorir had the same answer for him as was told afore.

Then was the Lawman prayed for a decision, and he said that he would fain hear if any charges came against this, whereby Angle should forfeit his blood-money, or else he said he must have whatsoever had been put on Grettir's head.

Then Thorvald Asgeirson called on Skeggi the Short-handed to put forth his case, and he summoned Thorbiorn Angle with a first summons for the witch-craft and sorcery, whereby Grettir must have got his bane, and then with another summons withal, for that they had borne weapons against a half-dead man, and hereon he claimed an award of outlawry.

Now folk drew much together on this side and on that, but few they were that gave aid to Thorbiorn; and things turned out otherwise than he had looked for, because Thorvald, and Isleif, his son-in-law, deemed it a deed worthy of death to bring men to their end by evil sorcery; but through the words of wise men these cases had such end, that Thorbiorn should sail away that same summer, and never come back to Iceland while any such were alive, as had the blood-suit for Grettir and Illugi.

And then, moreover, was it made law that all workers of olden craft should be made outlaws.

So when Angle saw what his lot would be, he gat him gone from the Thing, because it might well hap that Grettir's kin would set on him; nor did he get aught of the fee that was put on Grettir's head, for that Stein the Lawman would not that it should be paid for a deed of shame. None of those men of Thorbiorn's company who had fallen in Drangey were atoned, for they were to be made equal to the slaying of Illugi, but their kin were exceeding ill content therewith.

So men rode home from the Thing, and all blood-suits that men had against Grettir fell away.

Skeggi, the son of Gamli, who was son-in-law of Thorod Drapa-Stump, and sister's son of Grettir, went north to Skagafirth at the instance of Thorvald Asgeirson, and Isleif his son-in-law, who was afterwards Bishop of Skalholt, and by the consent of all the people got to him a keel, and went to Drangey to seek the corpses of the brothers, Grettir and Illugi; and he brought them back to Reeks, in Reek-strand, and buried them there at the church; and it is for a token that Grettir lies there, that in the days of the Sturlungs, when the church of the Reeks was moved, Grettir's bones were dug up, nor were they deemed so wondrous great, great enough though they were. The bones of Illugi were buried afterwards north of the church, but Grettir's head at home in the church at Biarg.

Goodwife Asdis abode at home at Biarg, and so well beloved she was, that no trouble was ever brought against her, no, not even while Grettir was in outlawry.

Skeggi the Short-handed took the household at Biarg after Asdis, and a mighty man he was; his son was Gamli, the father of Skeggi of Scarf-stead, and Asdis the mother of Odd the Monk. Many men are come from him.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII. Thorbiorn Angle goes to Norway, and thence to Micklegarth

Thorbiorn Angle took ship at Goose-ere, with whatso of his goods he might take with him; but Hialti his brother took to him his lands, and Angle gave him Drangey withal. Hialti became a great chief in aftertimes, but he has nought more to do with this tale.

So Angle fared out to Norway; he yet made much of himself, for he deemed he had wrought a great deed in the slaying of Grettir, and so thought many others, who knew not how all had come to pass, for many knew how renowned a man Grettir had been; withal Angle told just so much of their dealings together as might do him honour, and let such of the tale lie quiet as was of lesser glory.

Now this tale came in the autumn-tide east to Tunsberg, and when Thorstein Dromund heard of the slayings he grew all silent, because it was told him that Angle was a mighty man and a hardy; and he called to mind the words which he had spoken when he and Grettir talked together, long time ago, concerning the fashion of their arms.

So Thorstein put out spies on Angle's goings; they were both in Norway through the winter, but Thorbiorn was in the north-country, and Thorstein in Tunsberg, nor had either seen other; yet was Angle ware that Grettir had a brother in Norway, and thought it hard to keep guard of himself in an unknown land, wherefore he sought counsel as to where he should betake himself. Now in those days many Northmen went out to Micklegarth, and took war-pay there; so Thorbiorn deemed it would be good to go thither and get to him thereby both fee and fame, nor to abide in the North-lands because of the kin of Grettir. So he made ready to go from Norway, and get him gone from out the land, and made no stay till he came to Micklegarth, and there took war-hire.

CHAPTER LXXXIX. How the Short-Sword was the easier known when sought for by reason of the notch in the blade

Thorstein Dromund was a mighty man, and of the greatest account; and now he heard that Thorbiorn Angle had got him gone from the land out to Micklegarth; speedy were his doings thereon, he gave over his lands into his kinsmen's hands, and betook himself to journeying and to search for Angle; and ever he followed after whereas Angle had gone afore, nor was Angle ware of his goings.

So Thorstein Dromund came out to Micklegarth a little after Angle, and was fain above all things to slay him, but neither knew the other. Now had they will to be taken into the company of the Varangians, and the matter went well as soon as the Varangians knew that they were Northmen; and in those days was Michael Katalak king over Micklegarth.

Thorstein Dromund watched for Angle, if in some wise he might know him, but won not the game because of the many people there; and ever would he lie awake, ill-content with his lot, and thinking how great was his loss.

Now hereupon it befell that the Varangians were to go on certain warfare, and free the land from harrying; and their manner and law it was before they went from home to hold a weapon-show, and so it was now done; and when the weapon-show was established, then were all Varangians to come there, and those withal who were minded to fall into their company, and they were to show forth their weapons.

Thither came both Thorstein and Angle; but Thorbiorn Angle showed forth his weapons first; and he had the short-sword, Grettir's-loom; but when he showed it many praised it and said that it was an exceeding good weapon, but that it was a great blemish, that notch in the edge thereof; and asked him withal what had brought that to pass.

Angle said it was a thing worthy to be told of, "For this is the next thing to be said," says he, "that out in Iceland I slew that champion who was called Grettir the Strong, and who was the greatest warrior and the stoutest-hearted of all men of that land, for him could no man vanquish till I came forth for that end; and whereas I had the good hap to win him, I took his life; though indeed he had my strength many times over; then I drave this short-sword into his head, and thereby was a shard broken from out its edge."

So those who stood nigh said, that he must have been hard of head then, and each showed the short-sword to the other; but hereby Thorstein deemed he knew now who this man was, and he prayed withal to see the short-sword even as the others; then Angle gave it up with good will, for all were praising his bravery and that daring onset, and even in such wise did he think this one would do; and in no wise did he misdoubt him that Thorstein was there, or that the man was akin to Grettir.

Then Dromund took the short-sword, and raised it aloft, and hewed at Angle and smote him on the head, and so great was the stroke that it stayed but at the jaw-teeth, and Thorbiorn Angle fell to earth dead and dishonoured.

Thereat all men became hushed; but the Chancellor of the town seized Thorstein straightway, and asked for what cause he did such an ill-deed there at the hallowed Thing.

Thorstein said that he was the brother of Grettir the Strong, and that withal he had never been able to bring vengeance to pass till then; so thereupon many put in their word, and said that the

strong man must needs have been of great might and nobleness, in that Thorstein had fared so far forth into the world to avenge him: the rulers of the city deemed that like enough; but whereas there was none there to bear witness in aught to Thorstein's word, that law of theirs prevailed, that whosoever slew a man should lose nought but his life.

So then speedy doom and hard enow did Thorstein get; for in a dark chamber of a dungeon should he be cast and there abide his death, if none redeemed him therefrom with money. But when Thorstein came into the dungeon, there was a man there already, who had come to death's door from misery; and both foul and cold was that abode; Thorstein spake to that man and said,

"How deemest thou of thy life?"

He answered, "As of a right evil life, for of nought can I be holpen, nor have I kinsmen to redeem me."

Thorstein said, "Nought is of less avail in such matters than lack of good rede; let us be merry then, and do somewhat that will be glee and game to us."

The man said that he might have no glee of aught.

"Nay, then, but let us try it," said Thorstein. And therewithal he fell to singing; and he was a man of such goodly voice that scarcely might his like be found therefor, nor did he now spare himself.

Now the highway was but a little way from the dungeon, and Thorstein sang so loud and clear that the walls resounded therewith, and great game this seemed to him who had been half-dead erst; and in such wise did Thorstein keep it going till the evening.

CHAPTER XC. How the Lady Spes redeemed Thorstein from the Dungeon

There was a great lady of a castle in that town called Spes, exceeding rich and of great kin; Sigurd was the name of her husband, a rich man too, but of lesser kin than she was, and for money had she been wedded to him; no great love there was betwixt them, for she thought she had been wedded far beneath her; high-minded she was and a very stirring woman.

Now so it befell, that, as Thorstein made him merry that night, Spes walked in the street hard by the dungeon, and heard thence so fair a voice, that she said she had never yet heard its like. She went with many folk, and so now she bade them go learn who had that noble voice. So they called out and asked who lay there in such evil plight; and Thorstein named himself.

Then said Spes, "Art thou a man as much skilled in other matters as in singing?"

He said there was but little to show for that.

"What ill-deed hast thou done," said she, "that thou must needs be tormented here to the death?"

He said that he had slain a man, and avenged his brother thereby, "But I could not show that by witnesses," said Thorstein, "and therefore have I been cast into ward here, unless some man should redeem me, nor do I hope therefor, for no man have I here akin to me."

"Great loss of thee if thou art slain! and that brother of thine whom thou didst avenge, was he a man so famed, then?"

He said that he was more mighty than he by the half; and so she asked what token there was thereof. Then sang Thorstein this stave—

Field of rings, eight men, who raise
Din of sword in clattering ways,
Strove the good short-sword in vain
From the strong dead hand to gain;
So they ever strained and strove,
Till at last it did bebove,
The feared quickener of the fight,
From the glorious man to smite.

"Great prowess such a thing shows of the man," said those who understood the stave; and when she knew thereof, she spake thus, "Wilt thou take thy life from me, if such a choice is given thee?"

"That will I," said Thorstein, "if this fellow of mine, who sits hereby, is redeemed along with me; or else will we both abide here together."

She answers, "More of a prize do I deem thee than him."

"Howsoever that may be," said Thorstein, "we shall go away in company both of us together, or else shall neither go."

Then she went there, whereas were the Varangians, and prayed for freedom for Thorstein, and offered money to that end; and to this were they right willing; and so she brought about by her mighty friendships and her wealth that they were both set free. But as soon as Thorstein came out of the dungeon he went to see goodwife Spes, and she took him to her and kept him privily; but whiles was he with the Varangians in warfare, and in all onsets showed himself the stoutest of hearts.

CHAPTER XCI. Of the doings of Thorstein and the Lady Spes

In those days was Harald Sigurdson at Micklegarth, and Thorstein fell into friendship with him. Of much account was Thorstein held, for Spes let him lack no money; and greatly they turned their hearts one to the other, Thorstein and Spes; and many folk beside her deemed great things of his prowess.

Now her money was much squandered, because she ever gave herself to the getting of great friends; and her husband deemed that he could see that she was much changed, both in temper and many other of her ways, but most of all in the spending of money; both gold and good things he missed, which were gone from her keeping.

So on a time Sigurd her husband talks with her, and says that she has taken to strange ways. "Thou givest no heed to our goods," says he, "but squanderest them in many wise; and, moreover, it is even as if I saw thee ever in a dream, nor ever wilt thou be there whereas I am; and I know for sure that something must bring this about."

She answered, "I told thee, and my kinsfolk told thee, whenas we came together, that I would have my full will and freedom over all such things as it was be seeming for me to bestow, and for that cause I spare not thy goods. Hast thou perchance aught to say to me concerning other matters which may be to my shame?"

He answers, "Somewhat do I misdoubt me that thou holdest some man or other whom thou deemest better than I be."

"I wot not," says she, "what ground there may be thereto; but seems thou mayest speak with little truth; and yet, none-the-less, we two alone shall not speak on this matter if thou layest this slander on me."

So he let the talk drop for that time; she and Thorstein went on in the same way, nor were they wary of the words of evil folk, for she ever trusted in her many and wise friends. Oft they sat talking together and making merry; and on an evening as they sat in a certain loft, wherein were goodly things of hers, she bade Thorstein sing somewhat, for she thought the Goodman was sitting at the drink, as his wont was, so she bolted the door. But, when he had sung a certain while, the door was driven at, and one called from outside to open; and there was come the husband with many of his folk.

The goodwife had unlocked a great chest to show Thorstein her dainty things; so when she knew who was there, she would not unlock the door, but speaks to Thorstein, "Quick is my rede, jump into the chest and keep silent."

So he did, and she shot the bolt of the chest and sat thereon herself; and even therewith in came the husband into the loft, for he and his had broken open the door thereof.

Then said the lady, "Why do ye fare with all this uproar? are your foes after you then?"

The Goodman answered, "Now it is well that thou thyself givest proof of thyself what thou art; where is the man who trolled out that song so well e'en now? I wot thou deemest him of far fairer voice than I be."

She said: "Not altogether a fool is he who can be silent; but so it fares not with thee: thou deemest thyself cunning, and art minded to bind thy lie on my back. Well, then, let proof be made thereof! If there be truth in thy words, take the man; he will scarce have leapt out through the walls or the roof."

So he searched through the place, and found him not, and she said, "Why dost thou not take him then, since thou deemest the thing so sure?"

He was silent, nor knew in sooth amid what wiles he was come; then he asked his fellows if they had not heard him even as he had. But whereas they saw that the mistress disliked the matter, their witness came to nought, for they said that oft folk heard not things as they were in very sooth. So the husband went out, and deemed he knew that sooth well enough, though they had not found the man; and now for a long time he left spying on his wife and her ways.

Another time, long after, Thorstein and Spes sat in a certain cloth-bower, and therein were clothes, both cut and uncut, which the wedded folk owned; there she showed to Thorstein many kinds of cloth, and they unfolded them; but when they were least ware of it the husband came on them with many men, and brake into the loft; but while they were about that she heaped up clothes over Thorstein, and leaned against the clothes-stack when they came into the chamber.

"Wilt thou still deny," said the goodman, "that there was a man with thee, when such men there are as saw you both?"

She bade them not to go on so madly. "This time ye will not fail, belike; but let me be at peace, and worry me not."

So they searched through the place and found nought, and at last gave it up.

Then the goodwife answered and said, "It is ever good to give better proof than the guesses of certain folk; nor was it to be looked for that ye should find that which was not. Wilt thou now confess thy folly, husband, and free me from this slander?"

He said, "The less will I free thee from it in that I trow thou art in very sooth guilty of that which I have laid to thy charge; and thou wilt have to put forth all thy might in this case, if thou art to get this thrust from thee."

She said that that was in nowise against her mind, and therewithal they parted.

Thereafter was Thorstein ever with the Varangians, and men say that he sought counsel of Harald Sigurdson, and their mind it is that Thorstein and Spes would not have taken to those reides but for the trust they had in him and his wisdom.

Now as time wore on, goodman Sigurd gave out that he would fare from home on certain errands of his own. The goodwife nowise let him herein; and when he was gone, Thorstein came to Spes, and the twain were ever together. Now such was the fashion of her castle that it was built forth over the sea, and there were certain chambers therein whereunder the sea flowed; in such a chamber Thorstein and Spes ever sat; and a little trap-door there was in the floor of it, whereof none knew but those twain, and it might be opened if there were hasty need thereof.

Now it is to be told of the husband that he went nowhither, save into hiding, that he might spy the ways of the housewife; so it befell that, one night as they sat alone in the sea-loft and were glad together, the husband came on them unawares with a crowd of folk, for he had brought certain men to a window of the chamber, and bade them see if things were not even according to his word: and all said that he spake but the sooth, and that so belike he had done aforetime.

So they ran into the loft, but when Spes heard the crash, she said to Thorstein,

"Needs must thou go down hereby, whatsoever be the cost, but give me some token if thou comest safe from the place."

He said yea thereto, and plunged down through the floor, and the housewife spurned her foot at the lid, and it fell back again into its place, and no new work was to be seen on the floor.

Now the husband and his men came into the loft, and went about searching, and found nought, as was likely; the loft was empty, so that there was nought therein save the floor and the cross-benches, and there sat the goodwife, and played with the gold on her fingers; she heeded them little, and made as if there was nought to do.

All this the goodman thought the strangest of all, and asked his folk if they had not seen the man, and they said that they had in good sooth seen him.

Then said the goodwife, "Hereto shall things come as is said; *thrice of yore have all things happed*, and in likewise hast thou fared, Sigurd," says she, "for three times hadst thou undone my peace, meseems, and are ye any wiser than in the beginning?"

"This time I was not alone in my tale," said the goodman; "and now to make an end, shall thou go through the freeing by law, for in nowise will I have this shame unbooted."

"Meseems," says the goodwife, "thou biddest me what I would bid of thee, for good above all things I deem it to free myself from this slander, which has spread so wide and high, that it would be great dishonour if I thrust it not from off me."

"In likewise," said the goodman, "shalt thou prove that thou hast not given away or taken to thyself my goods."

She answers, "At that time when I free myself shall I in one wise thrust off from me all charges that thou hast to bring against me; but take thou heed whereto all shall come; I will at once free myself from all words that have been spoken here on this charge that thou now makest."

The goodman was well content therewith, and got him gone with his men.

Now it is to be told of Thorstein that he swam forth from under the chamber, and went aland where he would, and took a burning log, and held it up in such wise that it might be seen from the goodwife's castle, and she was abroad for long that evening, and right into the night, for that she would fain know if Thorstein had come aland; and so when she saw the fire, she deemed that she knew that Thorstein had taken land, for even such a token had they agreed on betwixt them.

The next morning Spes bade her husband speak of their matters to the bishop, and thereto was he fully ready. Now they come before the bishop, and the goodman put forward all the aforesaid charges against her.

The bishop asked if she had been known for such an one aforetime, but none said that they had heard thereof. Then he asked with what likelihood he brought those things against her. So the goodman brought forward men who had seen her sit in a locked room with a man beside her, and they twain alone: and therewith the goodman said that he misdoubted him of that man beguiling her.

The bishop said that she might well free herself lawfully from this charge if so she would. She said that it liked her well so to do, "and good hope I have," said Spes, "that I shall have great plenty of women to purge me by oath in this case."

Now was an oath set forward in words for her, and a day settled whereon the case should come about; and thereafter she went home, and was glad at heart, and Thorstein and Spes met, and settled fully what they should do.

CHAPTER XCII. Of the Oath that Spes made before the Bishop

Now that day past, and time wore on to the day when Spes should make oath, and she bade thereto all her friends and kin, and arrayed herself in the best attire she had, and many noble ladies went with her.

Wet was the weather about that time, and the ways were miry, and a certain slough there was to go over or ever they might come to the church; and whenas Spes and her company came forth anigh this slough, a great crowd was there before them, and a multitude of poor folk who prayed them of alms, for this was in the common highway, and all who knew her deemed it was their part to welcome her, and prayed for good things for her as for one who had oft holpen them well.

A certain staff-propped carle there was amidst those poor folk, great of growth and long-bearded. Now the women made stay at the slough, because that the great people deemed the passage across over miry, and therewith when that staff-carle saw the goodwife, that she was better arrayed than the other women, he spake to her on this wise,

"Good mistress," said he, "be so lowly as to suffer me to bear thee over this slough, for it is the bounden duty of us staff-carles to serve thee all we may."

"What then," says she, "wilt thou bear me well, when thou mayst not bear thyself?"

"Yet would it show forth thy lowliness," says he, "nor may I offer better than I have withal; and in all things wilt thou fare the better, if thou hast no pride against poor folk."

"Wot thou well, then," says she, "that if thou bearest me not well it shall be for a beating to thee, or some other shame greater yet."

"Well, I would fain risk it," said he; and therewithal he got on to his feet and stood in the slough. She made as if she were sore afraid of his carrying her, yet nathless she went on, borne on his back; and he staggered along exceeding slowly, going on two crutches, and when he got midmost of the slough he began to reel from side to side. She bade him gather up his strength.

"Never shalt thou have made a worse journey than this if thou easiest me down here."

Then the poor wretch staggers on, and gathers up all his courage and strength, and gets close to the dry land, but stumbles withal, and falls head-foremost in such wise, that he cast her on to the bank, but fell into the ditch up to his armpits, and therewithal as he lay there caught at the goodwill, and gat no firm hold of her clothes, but set his miry hand on her knee right up to the bare thigh.

She sprang up and cursed him, and said that ever would evil come from wretched gangrel churl: "and thy full due it were to be beaten, if I thought it not a shame, because of thy misery."

Then said he, "Meted in unlike ways is man's bliss; me-thought I had done well to thee, and I looked for an alms at thy hands, and lo, in place thereof, I get but threats and ill-usage and no good again withal;" and he made as if he were exceeding angry.

Many deemed that he looked right poor and wretched, but she said that he was the wiliest of old churl; but whereas many prayed for him, she took her purse to her, and therein was many a penny of gold; then she shook down the money and said,

"Take thou this, carle; nowise good were it, if thou hadst not full pay for the hard words thou hadst of me; now have I parted with thee, even according to thy worth."

Then he picked up the gold, and thanked her for her good deed. Spes went to the church, and a great crowd was there before her. Sigurd pushed the case forward eagerly, and bade her free herself from those charges he had brought against her.

She said, "I heed not thy charges; what man dost thou say thou hast seen in my chamber with me? Lo now oft it befalls that some worthy man will be with me, and that do I deem void of any shame; but hereby will I swear that to no man have I given gold, and of no man have I had fleshly defilement save of my husband, and that wretched staff-carle who laid his miry hand on my thigh when I was borne over the slough this same day."

Now many deemed that this was a full oath, and that no shame it was to her, though the carle had laid hand on her unwittingly; but she said that all things must be told even as they were.

Thereafter she swore the oath in such form as is said afore, and many said thereon that she showed the old saw to be true, *swear loud and say little*. But for her, she said that wise men would think that this was not done by guile.

Then her kin fell to saying that great shame and grief it was for high-born women to have such lying charges brought against them bootless, whereas it was a crime worthy of death if it were openly known of any woman that she had done whoredoms against her husband. Therewithal Spes prayed the bishop to make out a divorce betwixt her and her husband Sigurd, because she said she might nowise bear his slanderous lying charges. Her kinsfolk pushed the matter forward for her, and so brought it about by their urgency that they were divorced, and Sigurd got little of the goods, and was driven away from the land withal, for here matters went as is oft shown that they will, and *the lower must low*; nor could he bring aught about to avail him, though he had but said the very sooth.

Now Spes took to her all their money, and was deemed the greatest of stirring women; but when folk looked into her oath, it seemed to them that there was some guile in it, and were of a mind that wise men must have taught her that way of swearing; and men dug out this withal, that the staff-carle who had carried her was even Thorstein Dromund. Yet for all that Sigurd got no righting of the matter.

CHAPTER XCIII. Thorstein and Spes come out to Norway

Thorstein Dromund was with the Varangians while the talk ran highest about these matters; so famed did he become that it was deemed that scarce had any man of the like prowess come thither; the greatest honours he gat from Harald Sigurdson, for he was of his kin; and after his counsels did Thorstein do, as men are minded to think.

But a little after Sigurd was driven from the land, Thorstein fell to wooing Spes to wife, and she took it meetly, but went to her kinsmen for rede; then they held meetings thereon, and were of one accord that she herself must rule the matter; then was the bargain struck, and good was their wedded life, and they were rich in money, and all men deemed Thorstein to be a man of exceeding good luck, since he had delivered himself from all his troubles.

The twain were together for two winters in Micklegarth, and then Thorstein said to his goodwife that he would fain go back to see his possessions in Norway. She said he should have his will, so they sold the lands they had there, and gat them great wealth of chattels, and then betook them from that land, with a fair company, and went all the way till they came to Norway. Thorstein's kin welcomed them both right heartily, and soon saw that Spes was bountiful and high-minded, and she speedily became exceeding well befriended. Some children they had between them, and they abode on their lands, and were well content with their life.

In those days was Magnus the Good king over Norway. Thorstein soon went to meet him, and had good welcome of him, for he had grown famous for the avenging of Grettir the Strong (for men scarce know of its happening that any other Iclander, save Grettir Asmundson, was avenged in Micklegarth); and folk say that Thorstein became a man of King Magnus, and for nine winters after he had come to Norway he abode in peace, and folk of the greatest honour were they deemed, he and his wife.

Then came home from Micklegarth king Harald Sigurdson, and King Magnus gave him half Norway, and they were both kings therein for a while; but after the death of King Magnus many of those who had been his friends were ill-content, for all men loved him; but folk might not abide the temper of King Harald, for that he was hard and was wont to punish men heavily.

But Thorstein Dromund was fallen into eld, though he was still the halest of men; and now was the slaying of Grettir Asmundson sixteen winters ago.

CHAPTER XCIV. Thorstein Dromund and Spes leave Norway again

At that time many urged Thorstein to go meet King Harald, and become his man; but he took not kindly to it.

Then Spes spake, "I will, Thorstein," says she, "that thou go not to meet Harald the king, for to another king have we much more to pay, and need there is that we turn our minds to that; for now we both grow old and our youth is long departed, and far more have we followed after worldly devices, than the teaching of Christ, or the ways of justice and uprightness; now wot I well that this debt can be paid for us neither by our kindred or our goods, and I will that we ourselves should pay it: now will I therefore that we change our way of life and fare away from this land and unto the abode of the Pope, because I well believe that so only may my case be made easy to me."

Thorstein said, "As well known to me as to thee are the things thou talkest of; and it is meet that thou have thy will herein, since thou didst ever give me my will, in a matter of far less hope; and in all things will we do as thou biddest."

This took men utterly unawares; Thorstein was by then sixty-seven years of age, yet hale in all wise.

So now he bid to him all his kindred and folk allied to him, and laid before them the things he had determined on. Wise men gave good words thereto, though they deemed of their departing as of the greatest loss.

But Thorstein said that there was nought sure about his coming back: "Now do I give thanks to all of you," says he, "for the heed ye paid to my goods when I was last away from the land; now I will offer you, and pray you to take to you my children's havings,

and my children, and bring them up according to the manliness that is in you; for I am fallen so far into eld that there is little to say as to whether I may return or not, though I may live; but ye shall in such wise look after all that I leave behind me here, even as if I should never come back to Norway."

Then men answered, that good redes would be plenteous if the housewife should abide behind to look after his affairs; but she said—

"For that cause did I come hither from the out-lands, and from Micklegarth, with Thorstein, leaving behind both kin and goods, for that I was fain that one fate might be over us both; now have I thought it good to be here; but I have no will to abide long in Norway or the North-lands if he goes away; ever has there been great love betwixt us withal, and nought has happened to divide us; now therefore will we depart together, for to both of us is known the truth about many things that befell since we first met."

So, when they had settled their affairs in this wise, Thorstein bade chosen folk divide his goods into halves; and his kin took the half which his children were to own, and they were brought up by their father's kin, and were in aftertimes the mightiest of men, and great kin in the Wick has come from them. But Thorstein and Spes divided their share of the goods, and some they gave to churches for their souls' health, and some they took with them. Then they betook themselves Romeward, and many folk prayed well for them.

CHAPTER XCV. How Thorstein Dromund and Spes fared to Rome and died there

Now they went their ways till they came to Rome-town; and so when they came before him, who was appointed to hear the shrifts of men, they told him well and truly all things even as they had happened, and with what cunning and craft they had joined together in wedlock; therewithal they gave themselves up with great humility to such penance for the amending of their lives as he should lay on them; but because that they themselves had turned their minds to the atoning of their faults, without any urging or anger from the rulers of the church, they were eased of all fines as much as might be, but were bidden gently that they should now and henceforth concern themselves reasonably for their souls' health, and from this time forward live in chastity, since they had gotten them release from all their guilt; and herewith they were deemed to have fared well and wisely.

Then said Spes, "Now, meseems, our matters have gone well and are come to an end, and no unlucky life have we had together; yet maybe fools will do after the pattern of our former life; now therefore let us make such an end to all, that good men also may follow after us and do the like: so let us go bargain with those who are deft in stone-craft; that they make for each of us a cell of stone, that we may thereby atone for what we have done against God."

So Thorstein laid down money for the making of a stone cell for each of them, and for such-like other things as they might need, and might not be without for the keeping of their lives; and then, when the stone work was done, and the time was meet therefor and all things were ready, they departed their worldly fellowship of their own free will, that they might the more enjoy a holy fellowship in another world. And there they abode both in their stone cells, and lived as long as God would have it, and so ended their lives. And most men say that Thorstein Dromund and Spes his wife may be deemed to be folk of the greatest good luck, all things being accounted of; but neither his children or any of his issue have come to Iceland for a tale to be made of them.

Now Sturla the Lawman says so much as that he deems no outlawed man ever to have been so mighty as Grettir the Strong; and thereto he puts forth three reasons—

And first in that he was the wisest of them all; for the longest in outlawry he was of any man, and was never won whiles he was hale.

And again, in that he was the strongest in all the land among men of a like age; and more fitted to lay ghosts and do away with hauntings than any other.

And thirdly, in that he was avenged out in Micklegarth, even as no other man of Iceland has been; and this withal, that Thorstein Dromund, who avenged him, was so lucky a man in his last days.

So here ends the story of Grettir Asmundson, our fellow-countryman. Thank have they who listened thereto; but thank little enow to him who scribbled out the tale.

GOOD PEOPLE, HERE THE WORK HATH END:
MAY ALL FOLK TO THE GOOD GOD WEND!

Gunnlaug's Saga

CHAPTER I. Of Thorstein Egilson and his Kin.

There was a man called Thorstein, the son of Egil, the son of Skallagrim, the son of Kveldulf the Hersir of Norway. Asgerd was the mother of Thorstein; she was the daughter of Biorn Hold. Thorstein dwelt at Burg in Burg-firth; he was rich of fee, and a great chief, a wise man, meek and of measure in all wise. He was nought of such wondrous growth and strength as his father Egil had been; yet was he a right mighty man, and much beloved of all folk.

Thorstein was goodly to look on, flaxen-haired, and the best-eyed of men; and so say men of lore that many of the kin of the Mere-men, who are come of Egil, have been the goodliest folk; yet, for all that, this kindred have differed much herein, for it is said that some of them have been accounted the most ill-favoured of men: but in that kin have been also many men of great prowess in many wise, such as Kiartan, the son of Olaf Peacock, and Slaying-Bardi, and Skuli, the son of Thorstein. Some have been great bards, too, in that kin, as Biorn, the champion of Hit-dale, priest Einar Skulison, Snorri Sturluson, and many others.

Now, Thorstein had to wife Jofrid, the daughter of Gunnar, the son of Hlifar. This Gunnar was the best skilled in weapons, and the lithest of limb of all bonderfolk who have been in Iceland; the second was Gunnar of Lithend; but Steinthor of Ere was the third. Jofrid was eighteen winters old when Thorstein wedded her; she was a widow, for Thorodd, son of Odd of Tongue, had had her to wife aforetime. Their daughter was Hungerd, who was brought up at Thorstein's at Burg. Jofrid was a very stirring woman; she and Thorstein had many children betwixt them, but few of them come into this tale. Skuli was the eldest of their sons, Kollsvein the second, Egil the third.

CHAPTER II. Of Thorsteins Dream.

One summer, it is said, a ship came from over the main into Gu-faros. Bergfinn was he hight who was the master thereof, a North-man of kin, rich in goods, and somewhat stricken in years, and a wise man he was withal.

Now, Goodman Thorstein rode to the ship, as it was his wont mostly to rule the market, and this he did now. The Eastmen got housed, but Thorstein took the master to himself, for thither he prayed to go. Bergfinn was of few words throughout the winter, but Thorstein treated him well. The Eastman had great joy of dreams.

One day in spring-tide Thorstein asked Bergfinn if he would ride with him up to Hawkfell, where at that time was the Thingstead of the Burg-firthers; for Thorstein had been told that the walls of his booth had fallen in. The Eastman said he had good will to go, so that day they rode, some three together, from home, and the house-carles of Thorstein withal, till they came up under Hawkfell to a farmstead called Foxholes. There dwelt a man of small wealth called Atli, who was Thorstein's tenant. Thorstein bade him come and work with them, and bring with him hoe and spade. This he did, and when they came to the tofts of the booth, they set to work all of them, and did out the walls.

The weather was hot with sunshine that day, and Thorstein and the Eastman grew heavy; and when they had moved out the walls, those two sat down within the tofts, and Thorstein slept, and fared

ill in his sleep. The Eastman sat beside him, and let him have his dream fully out, and when he awoke he was much wearied. Then the Eastman asked him what he had dreamt, as he had had such an ill time of it in his sleep.

Thorstein said, "Nay, dreams betoken nought."

But as they rode homeward in the evening, the Eastman asked him again what he had dreamt.

Thorstein said, "If I tell thee the dream, then shalt thou unriddle it to me, as it verily is."

The Eastman said he would risk it.

Then Thorstein said: "This was my dream; for methought I was at home at Burg, standing outside the men's-door, and I looked up at the house-roof, and on the ridge I saw a swan, goodly and fair, and I thought it was mine own, and deemed it good beyond all things. Then I saw a great eagle sweep down from the mountains, and fly thitherward and alight beside the swan, and chuckle over her lovingly; and methought the swan seemed well content thereat; but I noted that the eagle was black-eyed, and that on him were iron claws: valiant he seemed to me.

"After this I thought I saw another fowl come flying from the south quarter, and he, too, came hither to Burg, and sat down on the house beside the swan, and would fain be fond with her. This also was a mighty eagle.

"But soon I thought that the eagle first-come ruffled up at the coming of the other. Then they fought fiercely and long, and this I saw that both bled, and such was the end of their play, that each tumbled either way down from the house-roof, and there they lay both dead.

"But the swan sat left alone, drooping much, and sad of semblance.

"Then I saw a fowl fly from the west; that was a falcon, and he sat beside the swan and made fondly towards her, and they flew away both together into one and the same quarter, and therewith I awoke.

"But a dream of no mark this is," he says, "and will in all likelihood betoken gales, that they shall meet in the air from those quarters whence I deemed the fowl flew."

The Eastman spake: "I deem it nowise such," saith he.

Thorstein said, "Make of the dream, then, what seemeth likeliest to thee, and let me hear."

Then said the Eastman: "These birds are like to be fetches of men: but thy wife sickens now, and she will give birth to a woman-child fair and lovely; and dearly thou wilt love her; but high-born men shall woo thy daughter, coming from such quarters as the eagles seemed to fly from, and shall love her with overweening love, and shall fight about her, and both lose their lives thereby. And thereafter a third man, from the quarter whence came the falcon, shall woo her, and to that man shall she be wedded. Now, I have unravelled thy dream, and I think things will befall as I have said."

Thorstein answered: "In evil and unfriendly wise is the dream interpreted, nor do I deem thee fit for the work of unriddling dreams."

Then Eastman said, "Thou shalt find how it will come to pass."

But Thorstein estranged himself from the Eastman thenceforward, and he left that summer, and now he is out of the tale.

CHAPTER III. Of the Birth and Fostering of Helga the Fair.

This summer Thorstein got ready to ride to the Thing, and spake to Jofrid his wife before he went from home. "So is it," he says, "that thou art with child now, but thy child shall be cast forth if thou bear a woman; but nourished if it be a man."

Now, at this time when all the land was heathen, it was somewhat the wont of such men as had little wealth, and were like to have many young children on their hands, to have them cast forth, but an evil deed it was always deemed to be.

And now, when Thorstein had said this, Jofrid answers, "This is a word all unlike thee, such a man as thou art, and surely to a wealthy man like thee it will not seem good that this should be done."

Thorstein answered: "Thou knowest my mind, and that no good will hap if my will be thwarted."

So he rode to the Thing; but while he was gone Jofrid gave birth to a woman-child wondrous fair. The women would fain show her to the mother; she said there was little need thereof, but had her shepherd Thorvard called to her, and spake to him:—

"Thou shalt take my horse and saddle it, and bring this child west to Herdholt, to Thorgerd, Egil's daughter, and pray her to nourish it secretly, so that Thorstein may not know thereof. For with such looks of love do I behold this child, that surely I cannot bear to have it cast forth. Here are three marks of silver, have them in reward of thy work; but west there Thorgerd will get thee fare and food over the sea."

Then Thorvard did her bidding; he rode with the child to Herdholt, and gave it into Thorgerd's hands, and she had it nourished at a tenant's of hers who dwelt at Freedmans-stead up in Hvamfirth; but she got fare for Thorvard north in Steingrimsfirth, in Shell-creek, and gave him meet outfit for his sea-faring: he went thence abroad, and is now out of the story.

Now when Thorstein came home from the Thing, Jofrid told him that the child had been cast forth according to his word, but that the herdsman had fled away and stolen her horse. Thorstein said she had done well, and got himself another herdsman. So six winters passed, and this matter was nowise wotted of.

Now in those days Thorstein rode to Herdholt, being bidden there as guest of his brother-in-law, Olaf Peacock, the son of Hoskuld, who was then deemed to be the chief highest of worth among all men west there. Good cheer was made Thorstein, as was like to be; and one day at the feast it is said that Thorgerd sat in the high seat talking with her brother Thorstein, while Olaf was talking to other men; but on the bench right over against them sat three little maidens. Then said Thorgerd,—

"How dost thou, brother, like the look of these three little maidens sitting straight before us?"

"Right well," he answers, "but one is by far the fairest; she has all the goodness of Olaf, but the whiteness and the countenance of us, the Mere-men."

Thorgerd answered: "Surely this is true, brother, wherein thou sayest that she has the fairness and countenance of us Mere-folk, but the goodness of Olaf Peacock she has not got, for she is not his daughter."

"How can that be," says Thorstein, "being thy daughter none the less?"

She answered: "To say sooth, kinsman," quoth she, "this fair maiden is not my daughter, but thine."

And therewith she told him all as it had befallen, and prayed him to forgive her and his own wife that trespass.

Thorstein said: "I cannot blame you two for having done this; most things will fall as they are fated, and well have ye covered over my folly: so look I on this maiden that I deem it great good luck to have so fair a child. But now, what is her name?"

"Helga she is called," says Thorgerd.

"Helga the Fair," says Thorstein. "But now shalt thou make her ready to come home with me."

She did so, and Thorstein was led out with good gifts, and Helga rode with him to his home, and was brought up there with much honour and great love from father and mother and all her kin.

CHAPTER IV. Of Gunnlaug Worm-tongue and his Kin.

Now at this time there dwelt at Gilsbank, up in White-water-side, Illugi the Black, son of Hallkel, the son of Hrosskel. The mother of Illugi was Thurid Dandle, daughter of Gunnlaug Worm-tongue.

Illugi was the next greatest chief in Burgfirth after Thorstein Egilson. He was a man of broad lands and hardy of mood, and wont to do well to his friends; he had to wife Ingibjorg, the daughter of Asbjorn Hordson, from Ormolfsdale; the mother of Ingibjorg was Thorgerd, the daughter of Midfirth-Skeggi. The children of Illugi and Ingibjorg were many, but few of them have to do with this story. Hermund was one of their sons, and Gunnlaug another; both were hopeful men, and at this time of ripe growth.

It is told of Gunnlaug that he was quick of growth in his early youth, big, and strong; his hair was light red, and very goodly of fashion; he was dark-eyed, somewhat ugly-nosed, yet of lovesome countenance; thin of flank he was, and broad of shoulder, and the best-wrought of men; his whole mind was very masterful; eager was he from his youth up, and in all wise unsparing and hardy; he was a great skald, but somewhat bitter in his rhyming, and therefore was he called Gunnlaug Worm-tongue.

Hermund was the best beloved of the two brothers, and had the mien of a great man.

When Gunnlaug was fifteen winters old he prayed his father for goods to fare abroad withal, and said he had will to travel and see the manners of other folk. Master Illugi was slow to take the matter up, and said he was unlike to be deemed good in the outlands "when I can scarcely shape thee to my own liking at home."

On a morning but a very little afterwards it happened that Illugi came out early, and saw that his storehouse was opened, and that some sacks of wares, six of them, had been brought out into the road, and therewithal too some pack-gear. Now, as he wondered at this, there came up a man leading four horses, and who should it be but his son Gunnlaug. Then said he:—

"I it was who brought out the sacks."

Illugi asked him why he had done so. He said that they should make his faring goods.

Illugi said: "In nowise shalt thou thwart my will, nor fare anywhere sooner than I like!" and in again he swung the ware-sacks therewith.

Then Gunnlaug rode thence and came in the evening down to Burg, and goodman Thorstein asked him to bide there, and Gunnlaug was fain of that proffer. He told Thorstein how things had gone betwixt him and his father, and Thorstein offered to let him bide there as long as he liked, and for some seasons Gunnlaug abode there, and learned law-craft of Thorstein, and all men accounted well of him.

Now Gunnlaug and Helga would be always at the chess-playing together, and very soon each found favour with the other, as came to be proven well enough afterwards: they were very nigh of an age.

Helga was so fair, that men of lore say that she was the fairest woman of Iceland, then or since; her hair was so plenteous and long that it could cover her all over, and it was as fair as a band of gold; nor was there any so good to choose as Helga the Fair in all Burgfirth, and far and wide elsewhere.

Now one day, as men sat in the hall at Burg, Gunnlaug spake to Thorstein: "One thing in law there is which thou hast not taught me, and that is how to woo me a wife."

Thorstein said, "That is but a small matter," and therewith taught him how to go about it.

Then said Gunnlaug, "Now shalt thou try if I have understood all: I shall take thee by the hand and make as if I were wooing thy daughter Helga."

"I see no need of that," says Thorstein. Gunnlaug, however, groped then and there after his hand, and seizing it said, "Nay, grant me this though."

"Do as thou wilt, then," said Thorstein; "but be it known to all who are hereby that this shall be as if it had been unspoken, nor shall any guile follow herein."

Then Gunnlaug named for himself witnesses, and betrothed Helga to him, and asked thereafter if it would stand good thus.

Thorstein said that it was well; and those who were present were mightily pleased at all this.

CHAPTER V. Of Raven and his Kin.

There was a man called Onund, who dwelt in the south at Moss-fell: he was the wealthiest of men, and had a priesthood south there about the nesses. He was married, and his wife was called Geirny. She was the daughter of Gnup, son of Mold-Gnup, who settled at Grindwick, in the south country. Their sons were Raven, and Thorarin, and Eindridi; they were all hopeful men, but Raven was in all wise the first of them. He was a big man and a strong, the sightliest of men and a good skald; and when he was fully grown he fared between sundry lands, and was well accounted of wherever he came.

Thorod the Sage, the son of Eyvind, then dwelt at Hjalli, south in Olfus, with Skapti his son, who was then the spokesman-at-law in Iceland. The mother of Skapti was Ranveig, daughter of Gnup, the son of Mold-Gnup; and Skapti and the sons of Onund were sisters' sons. Between these kinsmen was much friendship as well as kinship.

At this time Thorfin, the son of Selthorir, dwelt at Red-Mel, and had seven sons, who were all the hopefulest of men; and of them were these—Thorgils, Eyjolf, and Thorir; and they were all the greatest men out there. But these men who have now been named lived all at one and the same time.

Next to this befell those tidings, the best that ever have befallen here in Iceland, that the whole land became Christian, and that all folk cast off the old faith.

CHAPTER VI. How Helga was vowed to Gunnlaug, and of Gunnlaug's faring abroad.

Gunnlaug Worm-Tongue was, as is aforesaid, whiles at Burg with Thorstein, whiles with his father Illugi at Gilsbank, three winters together, and was by now eighteen winters old; and father and son were now much more of a mind.

There was a man called Thorkel the Black; he was a house-carle of Illugi, and near akin to him, and had been brought up in his house. To him fell an heritage north at As, in Water-dale, and he prayed Gunnlaug to go with him thither. This he did, and so they rode, the two together, to As. There they got the fee; it was given up to them by those who had the keeping of it, mostly because of Gunnlaug's furtherance.

But as they rode from the north they guested at Grimstongue, at a rich bonder's who dwelt there; but in the morning a herdsman took Gunnlaug's horse, and it had sweated much by then he got it back. Then Gunnlaug smote the herdsman, and stunned him; but the bonder would in no wise bear this, and claimed boot therefor. Gunnlaug offered to pay him one mark. The bonder thought it too little.

Then Gunnlaug sang,—

Bade I the middling mighty
To have a mark of waves' flame;
Giver of grey seas' glitter,
This gift shalt thou make shift with.
If the elf sun of the waters
From out of purse thou lettest,
O waster of the worm's bedy
Awaits thee sorrow later.

So the peace was made as Gunnlaug bade, and in such wise the two rode south.

Now, a little while after, Gunnlaug asked his father a second time for goods for going abroad.

Illugi says, "Now shalt thou have thy will, for thou hast wrought thyself into something better than thou wert." So Illugi rode hastily from home, and bought for Gunnlaug half a ship which lay in Gufaros, from Audun Festargram—this Audun was he who would not flit abroad the sons of Oswif the Wise, after the slaying of Kiartan Olafson, as is told in the story of the Laxdalemen, which thing though betid later than this.—And when Illugi came home, Gunnlaug thanked him well.

Thorkel the Black betook himself to seafaring with Gunnlaug, and their wares were brought to the ship; but Gunnlaug was at

Burg while they made her ready, and found more cheer in talk with Helga than in toiling with chapmen.

Now one day Thorstein asked Gunnlaug if he would ride to his horses with him up to Long-water-dale. Gunnlaug said he would. So they ride both together till they come to the mountain-dairies of Thorstein, called Thorgils-stead. There were stud-horses of Thorstein, four of them together, all red of hue. There was one horse very goodly, but little tried: this horse Thorstein offered to give to Gunnlaug. He said he was in no need of horses, as he was going away from the country; and so they ride to other stud-horses. There was a grey horse with four mares, and he was the best of horses in Burgfirth. This one, too, Thorstein offered to give Gunnlaug, but he said, "I desire these in no wise more than the others; but why dost thou not bid me what I will take?"

"What is that?" said Thorstein.

"Helga the Fair, thy daughter," says Gunnlaug.

"That rede is not to be settled so hastily," said Thorstein; and therewithal got on other talk. And now they ride homewards down along Long-water.

Then said Gunnlaug, "I must needs know what thou wilt answer me about the wooing."

Thorstein answers: "I heed not thy vain talk," says he.

Gunnlaug says, "This is my whole mind, and no vain words."

Thorstein says, "Thou shouldst first know thine own will. Art thou not bound to fare abroad? and yet thou makest as if thou wouldst go marry. Neither art thou an even match for Helga while thou art so unsettled, and therefore this cannot so much as be looked at."

Gunnlaug says, "Where lookest thou for a match for thy daughter, if thou wilt not give her to the son of Illugi the Black; or who are they throughout Burg-firth who are of more note than he?"

Thorstein answered: "I will not play at men-mating," says he, "but if thou wert such a man as he is, thou wouldst not be turned away."

Gunnlaug said, "To whom wilt thou give thy daughter rather than to me?"

Said Thorstein, "Hereabout are many good men to choose from. Thorfin of Red-Mel hath seven sons, and all of them men of good manners."

Gunnlaug answers, "Neither Onund nor Thorfin are men as good as my father. Nay, thou thyself clearly fallest short of him—or what hast thou to set against his strife with Thorgim the Priest, the son of Kiallak, and his sons, at Thorsness Thing, where he carried all that was in debate?"

Thorstein answers, "I drave away Steinar, the son of Onund Sioni, which was deemed somewhat of a deed."

Gunnlaug says, "Therein thou wast holpen by thy father Egil; and, to end all, it is for few bonders to cast away my alliance."

Said Thorstein, "Carry thy cowing away to the fellows up yonder at the mountains; for down here, on the Meres, it shall avail thee nought."

Now in the evening they come home; but next morning Gunnlaug rode up to Gilsbank, and prayed his father to ride with him a-wooing out to Burg.

Illugi answered, "Thou art an unsettled man, being bound for faring abroad, but makest now as if thou wouldst busy thyself with wife-wooing; and so much do I know, that this is not to Thorstein's mind."

Gunnlaug answers, "I shall go abroad all the same, nor shall I be well pleased but if thou further this."

So after this Illugi rode with eleven men from home down to Burg, and Thorstein greeted him well. Early in the morning Illugi said to Thorstein, "I would speak to thee."

"Let us go, then, to the top of the Burg, and talk together there," says Thorstein; and so they did, and Gunnlaug went with them.

Then said Illugi, "My kinsman Gunnlaug tells me that he has begun a talk with thee on his own behalf, praying that he might woo thy daughter Helga; but now I would fain know what is like to come of this matter. His kin is known to thee, and our possessions; from my hand shall be spared neither land nor rule over men, if such things might perchance further matters."

Thorstein said, "Herein alone Gunnlaug pleases me not, that I find him an unsettled man; but if he were of a mind like thine, little would I hang back."

Illugi said, "It will cut our friendship across if thou gainsayest me and my son an equal match."

Thorstein answers, "For thy words and our friendship then, Helga shall be vowed, but not betrothed, to Gunnlaug, and shall bide for him three winters: but Gunnlaug shall go abroad and shape himself to the ways of good men; but I shall be free from all these matters if he does not then come back, or if his ways are not to my liking."

Thereat they parted; Illugi rode home, but Gunnlaug rode to his ship. But when they had wind at will they sailed for the main, and made the northern part of Norway, and sailed landward along Throndheim to Nidaros; there they rode in the harbour, and unshipped their goods.

CHAPTER VII. Of Gunnlaug in the East and the West.

In those days Earl Eric, the son of Hakon, and his brother Svein, ruled in Norway. Earl Eric abode as then at Hladir, which was left to him by his father, and a mighty lord he was. Skuli, the son of Thorstein, was with the earl at that time, and was one of his court, and well esteemed.

Now they say that Gunnlaug and Audun Festargram, and seven of them together, went up to Hladir to the earl. Gunnlaug was so clad that he had on a grey kirtle and white long-hose; he had a boil on his foot by the instep, and from this oozed blood and matter as he strode on. In this guise he went before the earl with Audun and the rest of them, and greeted him well. The earl knew Audun, and asked him tidings from Iceland. Audun told him what there was toward. Then the earl asked Gunnlaug who he was, and Gunnlaug told him his name and kin. Then the earl said: "Skuli Thorstein's son, what manner of man is this in Iceland?"

"Lord," says he, "give him good welcome, for he is the son of the best man in Iceland, Illugi the Black of Gilsbank, and my foster-brother withal."

The earl asked, "What ails thy foot, Iclander?"

"A boil, lord," said he.

"And yet thou wentest not halt?"

Gunnlaug answers, "Why go halt while both legs are long alike?"

Then said one of the earl's men, called Thorir: "He swaggereth hugely, this Iclander! It would not be amiss to try him a little."

Gunnlaug looked at him and sang:—

A courtman there is
Full evil I wis,
A bad man and black,
Belief let him lack.

Then would Thorir seize an axe. The earl spake: "Let it be," says he; "to such things men should pay no heed. But now, Iclander, how old a man art thou?"

Gunnlaug answers: "I am eighteen winters old as now," says he.

Then says Earl Eric, "My spell is that thou shalt not live eighteen winters more."

Gunnlaug said, somewhat under his breath: "Pray not against me, but for thyself rather."

The earl asked thereat, "What didst thou say, Iclander?"

Gunnlaug answers, "What I thought well befitting, that thou shouldst bid no prayers against me, but pray well for thyself rather."

"What prayers, then?" says the earl.

"That thou mightest not meet thy death after the manner of Earl Hakon, thy father."

The earl turned red as blood, and bade them take the rascal in haste; but Skuli stepped up to the earl, and said: "Do this for my words, lord, and give this man peace, so that he depart at his swiftest."

The earl answered, "At his swiftest let him be off then, if he will have peace, and never let him come again within my realm."

Then Skuli went out with Gunnlaug down to the bridges, where there was an England-bound ship ready to put out; therein Skuli

got for Gunnlaug a berth, as well as for Thorkel, his kinsman; but Gunnlaug gave his ship into Audun's ward, and so much of his goods as he did not take with him.

Now sail Gunnlaug and his fellows into the English main, and come at autumntide south to London Bridge, where they hauled ashore their ship.

Now at that time King Ethelred, the son of Edgar, ruled over England, and was a good lord; this winter he sat in London. But in those days there was the same tongue in England as in Norway and Denmark; but the tongues changed when William the Bastard won England, for thenceforward French went current there, for he was of French kin.

Gunnlaug went presently to the king, and greeted him well and worthily. The king asked him from what land he came, and Gunnlaug told him all as it was. "But," said he, "I have come to meet thee, lord, for that I have made a song on thee, and I would that it might please thee to hearken to that song." The king said it should be so, and Gunnlaug gave forth the song well and proudly; and this is the burden thereof:—

As God are all folk fearing
The free lord King of England,
Kin of all kings and all folk,
To Ethelred the head tow.

The king thanked him for the song, and gave him as song-reward a scarlet cloak lined with the costliest of furs, and golden-broidered down to the hem; and made him his man; and Gunnlaug was with him all the winter, and was well accounted of.

One day, in the morning early, Gunnlaug met three men in a certain street, and Thororm was the name of their leader; he was big and strong, and right evil to deal with. He said, "Northman, lend me some money."

Gunnlaug answered, "That were ill counselled to lend one's money to unknown men."

He said, "I will pay it thee back on a named day."

"Then shall it be risked," says Gunnlaug; and he lent him the fee withal.

But some time afterwards Gunnlaug met the king, and told him of the money-lending. The king answered, "Now hast thou thriven little, for this is the greatest robber and reiver; deal with him in no wise, but I will give thee money as much as thine was."

Gunnlaug said, "Then do we, your men, do after a sorry sort, if, treading sackless folk under foot, we let such fellows as this deal us out our lot. Nay, that shall never be."

Soon after he met Thororm and claimed the fee of him. He said he was not going to pay it.

Then sang Gunnlaug:—

Evil counselled art thou,
Gold from us withholding;
The reddener of the edges,
Pricking on with tricking.
Wot ye what? they called me,
Worm-tongue, yet a youngling;
Nor for nought so hight I;
Now is time to show it!

"Now I will make an offer good in law," says Gunnlaug; "that thou either pay me my money, or else that thou go on holm with me in three nights' space."

Then laughed the viking, and said, "Before thee none have come to that, to call me to holm, despite of all the ruin that many a man has had to take at my hands. Well, I am ready to go."

Thereon they parted for that time.

Gunnlaug told the king what had befallen; and he said, "Now, indeed, have things taken a right hopeless turn; for this man's eyes can dull any weapon. But thou shalt follow my rede; here is a sword I will give thee—with that thou shalt fight, but before the battle show him another."

Gunnlaug thanked the king well therefor.

Now when they were ready for the holm, Thororm asked what sort of a sword it was that he had. Gunnlaug unsheathed it and showed him, but had a loop round the handle of the king's sword, and slipped it over his hand; the bearserk looked on the sword, and said, "I fear not that sword."

But now he dealt a blow on Gunnlaug with his sword, and cut off from him nigh all his shield; Gunnlaug smote in turn with the king's gift; the bearserk stood shieldless before him, thinking he had the same weapon he had shown him, but Gunnlaug smote him his deathblow then and there.

The king thanked him for this work, and he got much fame therefor, both in England and far and wide elsewhere.

In the spring, when ships sailed from land to land, Gunnlaug prayed King Ethelred for leave to sail somewhither; the king asks what he was about then. Gunnlaug said, "I would fulfil what I have given my word to do," and sang this stave withal:—

My ways must I be wending
Three kings' walls to see yet,
And earls twain, as I promised
Erewhile to land-shares.
Neither will I wend me
Back, the worms-bed lacking,
By war-lord's son, the wealth-free,
For work done gift well given.

"So be it, then, skald," said the king, and withal he gave him a ring that weighed six ounces; "but," said he, "thou shalt give me thy word to come back next autumn, for I will not let thee go altogether, because of thy great prowess."

CHAPTER VIII. Of Gunnlaug in Ireland.

Thereafter Gunnlaug sailed from England with chapmen north to Dublin. In those days King Sigtrygg Silky-beard, son of King Olaf Kvaran and Queen Kornlada, ruled over Ireland; and he had then borne sway but a little while. Gunnlaug went before the king, and greeted him well and worthily. The king received him as was meet. Then Gunnlaug said, "I have made a song on thee, and I would fain have silence therefor."

The king answered, "No men have before now come forward with songs for me, and surely will I hearken to thine." Then Gunnlaug brought the song, whereof this is the burden,—

Swaru's steed
Doth Sigtrygg feed.

And this is therein also:—

Praise-worth I can
Well measure in man,
And kings, one by one,
Lo here, Kvararis son!
Gruageth the king
Gift of gold ring.
I, singer, know
His wont to bestow.
Let the high king say,
Heard he or this day,
Song drapu-measure
Dearer a treasure?

The king thanked him for the song, and called his treasurer to him, and said, "How shall the song be rewarded?"

"What hast thou will to give, lord?" says he.

"How will it be rewarded if I give him two ships for it?" said the king.

Then said the treasurer, "This is too much, lord; other kings give in regard of songs good keepsakes, fair swords, or golden rings."

So the king gave him his own raiment of new scarlet, a gold-embroidered kirtle, and a cloak lined with choice furs, and a gold ring which weighed a mark. Gunnlaug thanked him well.

He dwelt a short time here, and then went thence to the Orkneys.

Then was lord in Orkney, Earl Sigurd, the son of Hlodver; he was friendly to Icelanders. Now Gunnlaug greeted the earl well, and said he had a song to bring him. The earl said he would listen thereto, since he was of such great kin in Iceland.

Then Gunnlaug brought the song; it was a shorter lay, and well done. The earl gave him for lay-reward a broad axe, all inlaid with silver, and bade him abide with him.

Gunnlaug thanked him both for his gift and his offer, but said he was bound east for Sweden; and thereafter he went on board ship with chapmen who sailed to Norway.

In the autumn they came east to King's Cliff, Thorkel, his kinsman, being with him all the time. From King's Cliff they got

a guide up to West Gothland, and came upon a cheaping-stead, called Skarir: there ruled an earl called Sigurd, a man stricken in years. Gunnlaug went before him, and told him he had made a song on him; the earl gave a willing ear hereto, and Gunnlaug brought the song, which was a shorter lay.

The earl thanked him, and rewarded the song well, and bade him abide there that winter.

Earl Sigurd had a great Yule-feast in the winter, and on Yule-eve came thither men sent from Earl Eric of Norway, twelve of them together, and brought gifts to Earl Sigurd. The earl made them good cheer, and bade them sit by Gunnlaug through the Yule-tide; and there was great mirth at drinks.

Now the Gothlanders said that no earl was greater or of more fame than Earl Sigurd; but the Norwegians thought that Earl Eric was by far the foremost of the two. Hereon would they bandy words, till they both took Gunnlaug to be umpire in the matter.

Then he sang this stave:—

Tell ye, staves of spear-din,
How on sleek-side sea-horse
Oft this earl hath proven
Over-topping billows;
But Eric, victory's ash-tree,
Oft hath seen in east-seas
More of high blue billows
Before the bows a-roaring.

Both sides were content with his finding, but the Norwegians the best. But after Yule-tide those messengers left with gifts of goodly things, which Earl Sigurd sent to Earl Eric.

Now they told Earl Eric of Gunnlaug's finding; the earl thought that he had shown upright dealing and friendship to him herein, and let out some words, saying that Gunnlaug should have good peace throughout his land. What the earl had said came thereafter to the ears of Gunnlaug.

But now Earl Sigurd gave Gunnlaug a guide east to Tenthland, in Sweden, as he had asked.

CHAPTER IX. Of the Quarrel between Gunnlaug and Raven before the Swedish King.

In those days King Olaf the Swede, son of King Eric the Victorious, and Sigrid the High-counselled, daughter of Skogul Tosti, ruled over Sweden. He was a mighty king and renowned, and full fain of fame.

Gunnlaug came to Upsala towards the time of the Thing of the Swedes in spring-tide; and when he got to see the king, he greeted him. The king took his greeting well, and asked who he was. He said he was an Iceland-man.

Then the king called out: "Raven," says he, "what man is he in Iceland?"

Then one stood up from the lower bench, a big man and a stalwart, and stepped up before the king, and spake: "Lord," says he, "he is of good kin, and himself the most stalwart of men."

"Let him go, then, and sit beside thee," said the king.

Then Gunnlaug said, "I have a song to set forth before thee, king, and I would fain have peace while thou hearkenest thereto."

"Go ye first, and sit ye down," says the king, "for there is no leisure now to sit listening to songs."

So they did as he bade them.

Now Gunnlaug and Raven fell a-talking together, and each told each of his travels. Raven said that he had gone the summer before from Iceland to Norway, and had come east to Sweden in the forepart of winter. They soon got friendly together.

But one day, when the Thing was over, they were both before the king, Gunnlaug and Raven.

Then spake Gunnlaug, "Now, lord, I would that thou shouldst hear the song."

"That I may do now," said the king.

"My song too will I set forth now," says Raven.

"Thou mayst do so," said the king.

Then Gunnlaug said, "I will set forth mine first if thou wilt have it so, king."

"Nay," said Raven, "it behoveth me to be first, lord, for I myself came first to thee."

"Whereto came our fathers forth, so that my father was the little boat towed behind? Whereto, but nowhere?" says Gunnlaug. "And in likewise shall it be with us."

Raven answered, "Let us be courteous enough not to make this a matter of bandying of words. Let the king rule here."

The king said, "Let Gunnlaug set forth his song first, for he will not be at peace till he has his will."

Then Gunnlaug set forth the song which he had made to King Olaf, and when it was at an end the king spake. "Raven," says he, "how is the song done?"

"Right well," he answered; "it is a song full of big words and little beauty; a somewhat rugged song, as is Gunnlaug's own mood."

"Well, Raven, thy song," said the king.

Raven gave it forth, and when it was done the king said, "How is this song made, Gunnlaug?"

"Well it is, lord," he said; "this is a pretty song, as is Raven himself to behold, and delicate of countenance. But why didst thou make a short song on the king, Raven? Didst thou perchance deem him unworthy of a long one?"

Raven answered, "Let us not talk longer on this; matters will be taken up again, though it be later."

And thereat, they parted.

Soon after Raven became a man of King Olaf's, and asked him leave to go away. This the king granted him. And when Raven was ready to go, he spake to Gunnlaug, and said, "Now shall our friendship be ended, for that thou must needs shame me here before great men; but in time to come I shall cast on thee no less shame than thou hadst will to cast on me here."

Gunnlaug answers: "Thy threats grieve me nought. Nowhere are we likely to come where I shall be thought less worthy than thou."

King Olaf gave to Raven good gifts at parting, and thereafter.

CHAPTER X. How Raven came home to Iceland, and asked for Helga to Wife.

Now this spring Raven came from the east to Thrandheim, and fitted out his ship, and sailed in the summer to Iceland. He brought his ship to Leiruvag, below the Heath, and his friends and kinsmen were right fain of him. That winter he was at home with his father, but the summer after he met at the Althing his kinsman, Skapti the law-man.

Then said Raven to him, "Thine aid would I have to go a-wooing to Thorstein Egilson, to bid Helga his daughter."

Skapti answered, "But is she not already vowed to Gunnlaug Worm-tongue?"

Said Raven, "Is not the appointed time of waiting between them passed by? And far too wanton is he withal, that he should hold or heed it aught."

"Let us then do as thou wouldst," said Skapti.

Thereafter they went with many men to the booth of Thorstein Egilson, and he greeted them well.

Then Skapti spoke: "Raven, my kinsman, is minded to woo thy daughter Helga. Thou knowest well his blood, his wealth, and his good manners, his many mighty kinsmen and friends."

Thorstein said, "She is already the vowed maiden of Gunnlaug, and with him shall I hold all words spoken."

Skapti said, "Are not the three winters worn now that were named between you?"

"Yes," said Thorstein; "but the summer is not yet worn, and he may still come out this summer."

Then Skapti said, "But if he cometh not this summer, what hope may we have of the matter then?"

Thorstein answered, "We are like to come here next summer, and then may we see what may wisely be done, but it will not do to speak hereof longer as at this time."

Theorem they parted. And men rode home from the Althing. But this talk of Raven's wooing of Helga was nought hidden.

That summer Gunnlaug came not out.

The next summer, at the Althing, Skapti and his folk pushed the wooing eagerly, and said that Thorstein was free as to all matters with Gunnlaug.

Thorstein answered, "I have few daughters to see to, and fain am I that they should not be the cause of strife to any man. Now I will first see Illugi the Black." And so he did.

And when they met, he said to Illugi, "Dost thou not think that I am free from all troth with thy son Gunnlaug?"

Illugi said, "Surely, if thou wilt it. Little can I say herein, as I do not know clearly what Gunnlaug is about."

Then Thorstein went to Skapti, and a bargain was struck that the wedding should be at Burg, about winter-nights, if Gunnlaug did not come out that summer; but that Thorstein should be free from all troth with Raven if Gunnlaug should come and fetch his bride.

After this men ride home from the Thing, and Gunnlaug's coming was long drawn out. But Helga thought evilly of all these re-des.

CHAPTER XI. Of how Gunnlaug must needs abide away from Iceland.

Now it is to be told of Gunnlaug that he went from Sweden the same summer that Raven went to Iceland, and good gifts he had from King Olaf at parting.

King Ethelred welcomed Gunnlaug worthily, and that winter he was with the king, and was held in great honour.

In those days Knut the Great, son of Svein, ruled Denmark, and had new-taken his father's heritage, and he vowed ever to wage war on England, for that his father had won a great realm there before he died west in that same land.

And at that time there was a great army of Danish men west there, whose chief was Heming, the son of Earl Strut-Harald, and brother to Earl Sigvaldi, and he held for King Knut that land that Svein had won.

Now in the spring Gunnlaug asked the king for leave to go away, but he said, "It ill beseems that thou, my man, shouldst go away now, when all bodes such mighty war in the land."

Gunnlaug said, "Thou shalt rule, lord; but give me leave next summer to depart, if the Danes come not."

The king answered, "Then we shall see."

Now this summer went by, and the next winter, but no Danes came; and after midsummer Gunnlaug got his leave to depart from the king, and went thence east to Norway, and found Earl Eric in Thrandheim, at Hladir, and the earl greeted him well, and bade him abide with him. Gunnlaug thanked him for his offer, but said he would first go out to Iceland, to look to his promised maiden.

The earl said, "Now all ships bound for Iceland have sailed."

Then said one of the court, "Here lay, yesterday, Hallfred Troublous-Skald, out tinder Agdaness."

The earl answered, "That may well be; he sailed hence five nights ago."

Then Earl Eric had Gunnlaug rowed put to Hallfred, who greeted him with joy; and forthwith a fair wind bore them from land, and they were right merry.

This was late in the summer: but now Hallfred said to Gunnlaug, "Hast thou heard of how Raven, the son of Onund, is wooing Helga the Fair?"

Gunnlaug said he had heard thereof but dimly. Hallfred tells him all he knew of it, and therewith, too, that it was the talk of many men that Raven was in nowise less brave a man than Gunnlaug. Then Gunnlaug sang this stave:—

Light the weather wafteth;
But if this east wind drifted
Week-long, wild upon us
Little were I recking;
More this word I mind of
Me with Raven mated,
Than gain for me the gold-foe
Of days to make me grey-haired.

Then Hallfred said, "Well, fellow, may'st thou fare better in thy strife with Raven than I did in mine. I brought my ship some winters ago into Leiruvag, and had to pay a half-mark in silver to a house-carle of Raven's, but I held it back from him. So Raven rode at us with sixty men, and cut the moorings of the ship, and she was driven up on the shallows, and we were bound for a wreck.

Then I had to give selfdoom to Raven, and a whole mark I had to pay; and that is the tale of my dealings with him."

Then they two talked together alone of Helga the Fair, and Gunnlaug praised her much for her goodliness; and Gunnlaug sang:—

He who brand of battle
Beareth over-wary,
Never love shall let him
Hold the linen-folded;
For we when we were younger
In many a way were playing
On the outward nesses
From golden land outstanding.

"Well sung!" said Hallfred.

CHAPTER XII. Of Gunnlaug's landing, and how he found Helga wedded to Raven.

They made land north by Fox-Plain, in Hraunhaven, half a month before winter, and there unshipped their goods. Now there was a man called Thord, a bonder's son of the Plain, there. He fell to wrestling with the chapmen, and they mostly got worsted at his hands.

Then a wrestling was settled between him and Gunnlaug. The night before Thord made vows to Thor for the victory; but the next day, when they met, they fell-to wrestling. Then Gunnlaug tripped both feet from under Thord, and gave him a great fall; but the foot that Gunnlaug stood on was put out of joint, and Gunnlaug fell together with Thord.

Then said Thord, "Maybe that other things go no better for thee."

"What then?" says Gunnlaug.

"Thy dealings with Raven, if he wed Helga the Fair at winter-nights. I was anigh at the Thing when that was settled last summer."

Gunnlaug answered naught thereto.

Now the foot was swathed, and put into joint again, and it swelled mightily; but he and Hallfred ride twelve in company till they come to Gilsbank, in Burg-firth, the very Saturday night when folk sat at the wedding at Burg. Illugi was fain of his son Gunnlaug and his fellows; but Gunnlaug said he would ride then and there down to Burg. Illugi said it was not wise to do so, and to all but Gunnlaug that seemed good. But Gunnlaug was then unfit to walk, because of his foot, though he would not let that be seen. Therefore there was no faring to Burg.

On the morrow Hallfred rode to Hreda-water, in North-water dale, where Galti, his brother and a brisk man, managed their maters.

CHAPTER XIII. Of the Winter-Wedding at Skaney, and how Gunnlaug gave the Kings Cloak to Helga.

Tells the tale of Raven, that he sat at his weddings-feast at Burg, and it was the talk of most men that the bride was but drooping; for true is the saw that saith, "Long we remember what youth gained us," and even so it was with her now.

But this new thing befell at the feast, that Hungerd, the daughter of Thorod and Jofrid, was wooed by a man named Sveting, the son of Hafr-Biorn, the son of Mold-Gnup, and the wedding was to come off that winter after Yule, at Skaney, where dwelt Thorkel, a kinsman of Hungerd, and son of Torn Valbrandsson; and the mother of Torn was Thorodda, the sister of Odd of the Tongue.

Now Raven went home to Mossfell with Helga his wife. When they had been there a little while, one morning early before they rose up, Helga was awake, but Raven slept, and fared ill in his sleep. And when he woke Helga asked him what he had dreamt. Then Raven sang:—

In thine arms, so dreamed I,
Hewn was I, gold island!
Bride, in blood I bled there,
Bed of thine was reddened.
Never more then mightst thou,
Mead-bowl, spourer speedy,
Bind my gashes bloody,
Lind-leek-bough thou likst it.

Helga spake: "Never shall I weep therefor," quoth she; "ye have evilly beguiled me, and Gunnlaug has surely come out." And therewith she wept much.

But, a little after, Gunnlaug's coming was bruited about, and Helga became so hard with Raven, that he could not keep her at home at Mossfell; so that back they had to go to Burg, and Raven got small share of her company.

Now men get ready for the winter-wedding. Thorkel of Skaney bade Illugi the Black and his sons. But when master Illugi got ready, Gunnlaug sat in the hall, and stirred not to go. Illugi went up to him and said, "Why dost thou not get ready, kinsman?"

Gunnlaug answered, "I have no mind to go."

Says Illugi, "Nay, but certes thou shalt go, kinsman," says he; "and cast thou not grief over thee by yearning for one woman. Make as if thou knewest nought of it, for women thou wilt never lack."

Now Gunnlaug did as his father bade him; so they came to the wedding, and Illugi and his sons were set down in the high seat; but Thorstein Egilson, and Raven his son-in-law, and the bridegroom's following, were set in the other high seat, over against Illugi.

The women sat on the dais, and Helga the Fair sat next to the bride. Oft she turned her eyes on Gunnlaug, thereby proving the saw, "Eyes will bewray if maid love man."

Gunnlaug was well arrayed, and had on him that goodly raiment that King Sigtrygg had given him; and now he was thought far above all other men, because of many things, both strength, and goodliness, and growth.

There was little mirth among folk at this wedding. But on the day when all men were making ready to go away the women stood up and got ready to go home. Then went Gunnlaug to talk to Helga, and long they talked together: but Gunnlaug sang:—

Light-heart lived the Worm-tongue
All day long no longer
In mountain-home, since Helga
Had name of wife of Raven;
Nought foresaw thy father,
Hardener white of fight-thaw,
What my words should come to.
The maid to gold was wedded.

And again he sang:—

Worst reward I owe them,
Father thine, O wine-may,
And mother, that they made thee
So fair beneath thy maid-gear;
For thou, sweet field of sea-flame,
All joy hast slain within me.
Lo, here, take it, loveliest
E'er made of lord and lady!

And therewith Gunnlaug gave Helga the cloak, Ethelred's-gift, which was the fairest of things, and she thanked him well for the gift.

Then Gunnlaug went out, and by that time riding-horses had been brought home and saddled, and among them were many very good ones; and they were all tied up in the road. Gunnlaug leaps on to a horse, and rides a hand-gallop along the homefield up to a place where Raven happened to stand just before him; and Raven had to draw out of his way. Then Gunnlaug said,—

"No need to slink aback, Raven, for I threaten thee nought as at this time; but thou knowest forsooth, what thou hast earned."

Raven answered and sang,—

God of wound-flamed glitter,
Glorier of fight-goddess,
Must we fall a-fighting
For fairest kirtle-bearer?
Death-staffs many such-like
Fair as she is are there
In south-lands o'er the sea floods.
Sooth saith he who knoweth.

"Maybe there are many such, but they do not seem so to me," said Gunnlaug.

Therewith Illugi and Thorstein ran up to them, and would not have them fight.

Then Gunnlaug sang,—

The fair-hued golden goddess
For gold to Raven sold they,
(Raven my match as men say)
While the mighty isle-king,
Ethelred, in England
From eastward way delayed me,
Wherefore to gold-waster
Waneth tongue's speech-hunger.

Hereafter both rode home, and all was quiet and tidingless that winter through; but Raven had nought of Helga's fellowship after her meeting with Gunnlaug.

CHAPTER XIV. Of the Holmgang at the Althing.

Now in summer men ride a very many to the Althing: Illugi the Black and his sons with him, Gunnlaug and Hermund; Thorstein Egilson and Kolsvein his son; Onund, of Mossfell, and his sons all, and Sverting, Hafr-Biorn's son. Skapti yet held the spokesmanship-at-law.

One day at the Thing, as men went thronging to the Hill of Laws, and when the matters of the law were done there, then Gunnlaug craved silence, and said:—

"Is Raven, the son of Onund, here?"

He said he was.

Then spake Gunnlaug, "Thou well knowest that thou hast got to wife my avowed bride, and thus hast thou made thyself my foe. Now for this I bid thee to holm here at the Thing, in the holm of the Axe-water, when three nights are gone by."

Raven answers, "This is well bidden, as was to be looked for of thee, and for this I am ready, whenever thou wilt it."

Now the kin of each deemed this a very ill thing. But, at that time it was lawful for him who thought himself wronged by another to call him to fight on the holm.

So when three nights had gone by they got ready for the holmgang, and Illugi the Black followed his son thither with a great following. But Skapti, the lawman, followed Raven, and his father and other kinsmen of his.

Now before Gunnlaug went upon the holm he sang,—

Out to isle ofeel-field
Dight am I to hie me:
Give, O God, thy singer
With glaive to end the striving.
Here shall I the head cleave
Of Helga's love's devourer,
At last my bright sword bringeth
Sundering of head and body.

Then Raven answered and sang,—

Thou, singer, knowest not surely
Which of us twain shall gain it;
With edge for leg-swathe eager,
Here are the wound-scythes bare now.
In whatso-wise we wound us,
The tidings from the Thing here,
And fame of thanes' fair doings,
The fair young maid shall hear it.

Hermund held shield for his brother, Gunnlaug; but Sverting, Hafr-Biorn's son, was Raven's shield-bearer. Whoso should be wounded was to ransom himself from the holm with three marks of silver.

Now, Raven's part it was to deal the first blow, as he was the challenged man. He hewed at the upper part of Gunnlaug's shield, and the sword brake asunder just beneath the hilt, with so great might he smote; but the point of the sword flew up from the shield and struck Gunnlaug's cheek, whereby he got just grazed; with that their fathers ran in between them, and many other men.

"Now," said Gunnlaug, "I call Raven overcome, as he is weaponless."

"But I say that thou art vanquished, since thou art wounded," said Raven.

Now, Gunnlaug was nigh mad, and very wrathful, and said it was not tried out yet.

Illugi, his father, said they should try no more for that time.

Gunnlaug said, "Beyond all things I desire that I might in such wise meet Raven again, that thou, father, wert not anigh to part us."

And thereat they parted for that time, and all men went back to their booths.

But on the second day after this it was made law in the law-court that, henceforth, all holmgangs should be forbidden; and this was done by the counsel of all the wisest men that were at the Thing; and there, indeed, were all the men of most counsel in all the land. And this was the last holmgang fought in Iceland, this, wherein Gunnlaug and Raven fought.

But this Thing was the third most thronged Thing that has been held in Iceland; the first was after Njal's burning, the second after the Heath-slaughters.

Now, one morning, as the brothers Hermund and Gunnlaug went to Axe-water to wash, on the other side went many women towards the river, and in that company was Helga the Fair. Then said Hermund,—

"Dost thou see thy friend Helga there on the other side of the river?"

"Surely, I see her," says Gunnlaug, and withal he sang:—

Born was she for men's bickering:
Sore bale hath wrought the war-stem
And I yearned ever madly
To hold that oak-tree golden.
To me then, me destroyer
Of swan-mead's flame, unneedful
This looking on the dark-eyed,
This golden land's beholding.

Therewith they crossed the river, and Helga and Gunnlaug spake awhile together, and as the brothers crossed the river eastward back again, Helga stood and gazed long after Gunnlaug.

Then Gunnlaug looked back and sang:—

Moon of linen-lapped one,
Leek-sea-bearing goddess,
Hawk-keen out of heaven
Shone all bright upon me;
But that eyelid's moonbeam
Of gold-necklaced goddess
Her hath all undoing
Wrought, and me made nought of.

CHAPTER XV. How Gunnlaug and Raven agreed to go East to Norway, to try the matter again.

Now after these things were gone by men rode home from the Thing, and Gunnlaug dwelt at home at Gilsbank.

On a morning when he awoke all men had risen up, but he alone still lay abed; he lay in a shut-bed behind the seats. Now into the hall came twelve men, all full armed, and who should be there but Raven, Onund's son; Gunnlaug sprang up forthwith, and got to his weapons.

But Raven spake, "Thou art in risk of no hurt this time," quoth he, "but my errand hither is what thou shalt now hear: Thou didst call me to a holmgang last summer at the Althing, and thou didst not deem matters to be fairly tried therein; now I will offer thee this, that we both fare away from Iceland, and go abroad next summer, and go on holm in Norway, for there our kinsmen are not like to stand in our way."

Gunnlaug answered, "Hail to thy words, stoutest of men! this thine offer I take gladly; and here, Raven, mayest thou have cheer as good as thou mayest desire."

"It is well offered," said Raven, "but this time we shall first have to ride away." Thereon they parted.

Now the kinsmen of both sore disliked them of this, but could in no wise undo it, because of the wrath of Gunnlaug and Raven; and, after all, that must betide that drew towards.

Now it is to be said of Raven that he fitted out his ship in Leiruvag; two men are named that went with him, sisters' sons of his father Onund, one hight Grim, the other Olaf, doughty men both. All the kinsmen of Raven thought it great scathe when he went away, but he said he had challenged Gunnlaug to the holmgang because he could have no joy soever of Helga; and he said, withal, that one must fall before the other.

So Raven put to sea, when he had wind at will, and brought his ship to Thrandheim, and was there that winter and heard nought of Gunnlaug that winter through; there lie abode him the summer

following: and still another winter was he in Thrandheim, at a place called Lifangr.

Gunnlaug Worm-tongue took ship with Hallfred Troublous-Skald, in the north at The Plain; they were very late ready for sea.

They sailed into the main when they had a fair wind, and made Orkney a little before the winter. Earl Sigurd Lodverson was still lord over the isles, and Gunnlaug went to him and abode there that winter, and the earl held him of much account.

In the spring the earl would go on warfare, and Gunnlaug made ready to go with him; and that summer they harried wide about the South-isles and Scotland's firths, and had many fights, and Gunnlaug always showed himself the bravest and doughtiest of fellows, and the hardest of men wherever they came.

Earl Sigurd went back home early in the summer, but Gunnlaug took ship with chapmen, sailing for Norway, and he and Earl Sigurd parted in great friendship.

Gunnlaug fared north to Thrandheim, to Hladir, to see Earl Eric, and dwelt there through the early winter; the earl welcomed him gladly, and made offer to Gunnlaug to stay with him, and Gunnlaug agreed thereto.

The earl had heard already how all had befallen between Gunnlaug and Raven, and he told Gunnlaug that he laid ban on their fighting within his realm; Gunnlaug said the earl should be free to have his will herein.

So Gunnlaug abode there the winter through, ever heavy of mood.

CHAPTER XVI. How the two Foes met and fought at Dingness.

But on a day in spring Gunnlaug was walking abroad, and his kinsman Thorkel with him; they walked away from the town, till on the meads. before them they saw a ring of men, and in that ring were two men with weapons fencing; but one was named Raven, the other Gunnlaug, while they who stood by said that Icelanders smote light, and were slow to remember their words.

Gunnlaug saw the great mocking hereunder, and much jeering was brought into the play; and withal he went away silent.

So a little while after he said to the earl that he had no mind to bear any longer the jeers and mocks of his courtiers about his dealings with Raven, and therewith he prayed the earl to give him a guide to Lifangr: now before this the earl had been told that Raven had left Lifangr and gone east to Sweden; therefore, he granted Gunnlaug leave to go, and gave him two guides for the journey.

Now Gunnlaug went from Hladir with six men to Lifangr; and, on the morning of the very day whereas Gunnlaug came in in the evening, Raven had left Lifangr with four men. Thence Gunnlaug went to Vera-dale, and came always in the evening to where Raven had been the night before.

So Gunnlaug went on till he came to the uppermost farm in the valley, called Sula, wherefrom had Raven fared in the morning; there he stayed not his journey, but kept on his way through the night.

Then in the morning at sun-rise they saw one another. Raven had got to a place where were two waters, and between them flat meads, and they are called Gleipni's meads: but into one water stretched a little ness called Dingness. There on the ness Raven and his fellows, five together, took their stand. With Raven were his kinsmen, Grim and Olaf.

Now when they met, Gunnlaug said, "It is well that we have found one another."

Raven said that he had nought to quarrel with therein;

"But now," says he, "thou mayest choose as thou wilt, either that we fight alone together, or that we fight all of us man to man."

Gunnlaug said that either way seemed good to him.

Then spake Raven's kinsmen, Grim and Olaf, and said that they would little like to stand by and look on the fight, and in like wise spake Thorkel the Black, the kinsman of Gunnlaug.

Then said Gunnlaug to the earl's guides, "Ye shall sit by and aid neither side, and be here to tell of our meeting," and so they did.

So they set on, and fought dauntlessly, all of them. Grim and Olaf went both against Gunnlaug alone, and so closed their deal-

ings with him that Gunnlaug slew them both and got no wound. This proves Thord Kolbeinson in a song that he made on Gunnlaug the Wormtongue:—

Grim and Olaf great-hearts
In Gondul's din, with thin sword
First did Gunnlaug fell there
Ere at Raven fared he;
Bold, with blood be-drifted
Bane of three the thane was;
War-lord of the wave-horse
Wrought for men folks' slaughter.

Meanwhile Raven and Thorkel the Black, Gunnlaug's kinsman, fought until Thorkel fell before Raven and lost his life; and so at last all their fellowship fell. Then they two alone fought together with fierce onsets and mighty strokes, which they dealt each the other, falling on furiously without stop or stay.

Gunnlaug had the sword Ethelred's-gift, and that was the best of weapons. At last Gunnlaug dealt a mighty blow at Raven, and cut his leg from under him; but none the more did Raven fall, but swung round up to a tree-stem, whereat he steadied the stump.

Then said Gunnlaug, "Now thou art no more meet for battle, nor will I fight with thee any longer, a maimed man."

Raven answered: "So it is," said he, "that my lot is now all the worse lot, but it were well with me yet, might I but drink somewhat."

Gunnlaug said, "Bewray me not if I bring thee water in my helm."

"I will not bewray thee," said Raven. Then went Gunnlaug to a brook and fetched water in his helm, and brought it to Raven; but Raven stretched forth his left hand to take it, but with his right hand drove his sword into Gunnlaug's head, and that was a mighty great wound.

Then Gunnlaug said, "Evilly hast thou beguiled me, and done traitorously wherein I trusted thee."

Raven answers, "Thou sayest sooth, but this brought me to it, that I beguiled thee to lie in the bosom of Helga the Fair."

Thereat they fought on, recking of nought; but the end of it was that Gunnlaug overcame Raven, and there Raven lost his life..

Then the earl's guides came forward and bound the head-wound of Gunnlaug, and in meanwhile, he sat and sang:—

O thou sword-storm stirrer,
Raven, stem of battle
Famous, fared against me
Fiercely in the spear din.
Many a flight of metal
Was borne on me this morning,
By the spear-walls' builder,
Ring-bearer, on hard Dingness.

After that they buried the dead, and got Gunnlaug on to his horse thereafter, and brought him right down to Lifangr. There he lay three nights, and got all his rights of a priest, and died thereafter, and was buried at the church there.

All men thought it great scathe of both of these men, Gunnlaug and Raven, amid such deeds as they died.

CHAPTER XVII. The News of the Fight brought to Iceland.

Now this summer, before these tidings were brought out hither to Iceland, Illugi the Black, being at home at Gilsbank, dreamed a dream: he thought that Gunnlaug came to him in his sleep, all bloody, and he sang in the dream this stave before him; and Illugi remembered the song when he woke, and sang it before others:—

Knew I of the hewing
Of Raven's hilt-finned steel-fish
Byrny-shearing, sword-edge
Sharp clave leg of Raven.
Of warm wounds drank the eagle,
When the war-rod slender,
Cleaver of the corpses,
Clave the head of Gunnlaug.

This portent befel south at Mossfell, the self-same night, that Onund dreamed how Raven came to him, covered all over with blood, and sang:—

Red is the sword, but I now
 Am undone by Sword-Odin.
 'Gainst shields beyond the sea-flood
 The ruin of shields was wielded.
 Methinks the blood-fowl blood-stained
 In blood o'er men's heads stood there,
 The wound-erne yet wound-eager
 Trod over wounded bodies.

Now the second summer after this, Illugi the Black spoke at the Althing from the Hill of Laws, and said:—

“Wherewith wilt thou make atonement to me for my son, whom Raven, thy son, beguiled in his troth?”

Onund answers, “Be it far from me to atone for him, so sorely as their meeting hath wounded me. Yet will I not ask atonement of thee for my son.”

“Then shall my wrath come home to some of thy kin,” says Illugi. And withal after the Thing was Illugi at most times very sad.

Tells the tale how this autumn Illugi rode from Gilsbank with thirty men, and came to Mossfell early in the morning. Then Onund got into the church with his sons, and took sanctuary; but Illugi caught two of his kin, one called Biorn and the other Thorgrim, and had Biorn slain, but the feet smitten from Thorgrim. And thereafter Illugi rode home, and there was no righting of this for Onund.

Hermund, Illugi's son, had little joy after the death of Gunnlaug his brother, and deemed he was none the more avenged even though this had been wrought.

Now there was a man called Raven, brother's son to Onund of Mossfell; he was a great sea-farer, and had a ship that lay up in Ramfirth: and in the spring Hermund Illugison rode from home alone north over Holt-beacon Heath, even to Ramfirth, and out as far as Board-ere to the ship of the chapmen. The chapmen were then nearly ready for sea; Raven, the ship-master, was on shore, and many men with him; Hermund rode up to him, and thrust him through with his spear, and rode away forthwith: but all Raven's men were bewildered at seeing Hermund.

No atonement came for this slaying, and therewith ended the dealings of Illugi the Black and Onund of Mossfell.

CHAPTER XVIII. The Death of Helga the Fair.

AS time went on, Thorstein Egilson married his daughter Helga to a man called Thorkel, son of Hallkel, who lived west in Hraundale. Helga went to his house with him, but loved him little, for she cannot cease to think of Gunnlaug, though he be dead. Yet was Thorkel a doughty man, and wealthy of goods, and a good skald.

They had children together not a few, one of them was called Thorarin, another Thorstein, and yet more they had.

But Helga's chief joy was to pluck at the threads of that cloak, Gunnlaug's gift, and she would be ever gazing at it.

But on a time there came a great sickness to the house of Thorkel and Helga, and many were bed-ridden for a long time. Helga also fell sick, and yet she could not keep abed.

So one Saturday evening Helga sat in the fire-hall, and leaned her head upon her husband's knees, and had the cloak Gunnlaug's gift sent for; and when the cloak came to her she sat up and plucked at it, and gazed thereon awhile, and then sank back upon her husband's bosom, and was dead. Then Thorkel sang this:—

Dead in mine arms she droopeth,
 My dear one, gold-rings bearer,
 For God hath changed the life-days
 Of this Lady of the linen.
 Weary pain hath pined her,
 But unto me, the seeker
 Of hoard of fishes highway,
 Abiding here is wearier.

Helga was buried in the church there, but Thorkel dwelt yet at Hraundale: but a great matter seemed the death of Helga to all, as was to be looked for.

AND HERE ENDETH THE STORY.

Frithiof's Saga

CHAPTER I. Of King Belt and Thorstein Vikingson and their Children.

Thus beginneth the tale, telling how that King Beli ruled over Sogn-land; three children had he, whereof Helgi was his first son, and Halfdan his second, but Ingibiorg his daughter. Ingibiorg was fair of face and wise of mind, and she was ever accounted the foremost of the king's children.

Now a certain strand went west of the firth, and a great stead was thereon, which was called Baldur's Meads; a Place of Peace was there, and a great temple, and round about it a great garth of pales: many gods were there, but amidst them all was Baldur held of most account. So jealous were the heathen men of this stead, that they would have no hurt done therein to man nor beast, nor might any man have dealings with a woman there.

Sowstrand was the name of that stead whereas the king dwelt; but on the other side the firth was an abode named Foreness, where dwelt a man called Thorstein, the son of Viking; and his stead was over against the king's dwelling.

Thorstein had a son by his wife called Frithiof: he was the tallest and strongest of men, and more furnished of all prowess than any other man, even from his youth up. Frithiof the Bold was he called, and so well beloved was he, that all prayed for good things for him.

Now the king's children were but young when their mother died; but a goodman of Sogn, named Hilding, prayed to have the king's daughter to foster: so there was she reared well and needfully: and she was called Ingibiorg the Fair. Frithiof also was fostered of goodman Hilding, wherefore was he foster-brother to the king's daughter, and they two were peerless among children.

Now King Beli's chattels began to ebb fast away from his hands, for he was grown old.

Thorstein had rule over the third part of the realm, and in him lay the king's greatest strength.

Every third year Thorstein feasted the king at exceeding great cost, and the king feasted Thorstein the two years between.

Helgi, Beli's son, from his youth up turned much to blood-offering; neither were those brethren well-beloved.

Thorstein had a ship called Ellidi, which pulled fifteen oars on either board; it ran up high stem and stern, and was strong-built like an ocean-going ship, and its bulwarks were clamped with iron.

So strong was Frithiof that he pulled the two bow oars of Ellidi; but either oar was thirteen ells long, and two men pulled every oar elsewhere.

Frithiof was deemed peerless amid the young men of that time, and the king's sons envied him, whereas he was more praised than they.

Now King Beli fell sick; and when the sickness lay heavy on him he called his sons to him and said to them: "This sickness will bring me to mine end, therefore will I bid you this, that ye hold fast to those old friends that I have had; for meseems in all things ye fall short of that father and son, Thorstein and Frithiof, yea, both in good counsel and in hardihood. A mound ye shall raise over me."

So with that Beli died.

Thereafter Thorstein fell sick; so he spake to Frithiof: "Kinsman," says he, "I will crave this of thee, that thou bow thy will before the king's sons, for their dignity's sake; yet doth my heart

speak goodly things to me concerning thy fortune. Now would I be laid in my mound over against King Beli's mound, down by the sea on this side the firth, whereas it may be easiest for us to cry out each to each of tidings drawing nigh."

A little after this Thorstein departed, and was laid in mound even as he had bidden; but Frithiof took the land and chattels after him. Biorn and Asmund were Frithiof's foster-brethren; they were big and strong men both.

CHAPTER II. Frithiof wooeth Ingibiorg of those Brethren.

So Frithiof became the most famed of men, and the bravest in all things that may try a man.

Biorn, his foster-brother, he held in most account of all, but Asmund served the twain of them.

The ship Ellidi, he gat, the best of good things, of his father's heritage, and another possession therewith—a gold ring; no dearer was in Norway.

So bounteous a man was Frithiof withal, that it was the talk of most, that he was a man of no less honour than those brethren, but it were for the name of king; and for this cause they held Frithiof in hate and enmity, and it was a heavy thing to them that he was called greater than they: furthermore they thought they could see that Ingibiorg, their sister, and Frithiof were of one mind together.

It befell hereon that the kings had to go to a feast to Frithiof's house at Foreness; and there it happened according to wont that he gave to all men beyond that they were worthy of. Now Ingibiorg was there, and she and Frithiof talked long together; and the king's daughter said to him:—

A goodly gold ring hast thou.
'Yea, in good sooth,' said he.

Thereafter went those brethren to their own home, and greater grew their enmity of Frithiof.

A little after grew Frithiof heavy of mood, and Biorn, his foster-brother, asked him why he fared so.

He said he had it in his mind to woo Ingibiorg. "For though I be named by a lesser name than those brethren, yet am I not fashioned lesser."

"Even so let us do then," quoth Biorn. So Frithiof fared with certain men unto those brethren; and the kings were sitting on their father's mound when Frithiof greeted them well, and then set forth his wooing, and prayed for their sister Ingibiorg, the daughter of Beli.

The kings said: "Not otherwise is this thine asking, whereas thou wouldst have us give her to one who lacketh dignity; wherefore we gainsay thee this utterly."

Said Frithiof: "Then is mine errand soon sped; but in return never will I give help to you henceforward, nay, though ye need it ever so much."

They said they heeded it nought: so Frithiof went home, and was joyous once more.

CHAPTER III. Of King Ring and those Brethren.

There was a king named Ring, who ruled over Ringrealm, which also was in Norway: a mighty folk-king he was, and a great man, but come by now unto his latter days.

Now he spake to his men: "Lo, I have heard that the sons of King Beli have brought to nought their friendship with Frithiof, who is the noblest of men; wherefore will I send men to these kings, and bid them choose whether they will submit them to me and pay me tribute, or else that I bring war on them: and all things then shall lie ready to my hand to take, for they have neither might nor wisdom to withstand me; yet great fame were it to my old age to overcome them."

After that fared the messengers of King Ring, and found those brethren, Helgi and Halfdan, in Sogn, and spake to them thus: "King Ring sends bidding to you to send him tribute, or else will he war against your realm."

They answered and said that they would not learn in the days of their youth what they would be loth to know in their old age, even how to serve King Ring with shame. "Nay, now shall we draw together all the folk that we may."

Even so they did; but now, when they beheld their force that it was but little, they sent Hilding their fosterer to Frithiof to bid him come help them against King Ring. Now Frithiof sat at the knave-play when Hilding came thither, who spake thus: "Our kings send thee greeting, Frithiof, and would have thy help in battle against King Ring, who cometh against their realm with violence and wrong."

Frithiof answered him nought, but said to Biorn, with whom he was playing: "A bare place in thy board, foster-brother, and nowise mayst thou amend it; nay, for my part I shall beset thy red piece there, and wot whether it be safe."

Then Hilding spake again:

"King Helgi bade me say thus much, Frithiof, that thou shouldst go on this journey with them, or else look for ill at their hands when they at the last come back."

"A double game, foster-brother," said Biorn; "and two ways to meet thy play."

Frithiof said: "Thy play is to fall first on the knave, yet the double game is sure to be."

No other outcome of his errand had Hilding: he went back speedily to the kings, and told them Frithiof's answer.

They asked Hilding what he made out of those words. He said: "Whereas he spake of the bare place he will have been thinking of the lack in this journey of yours; but when he said he would beset the red piece, that will mean Ingibjorg, your sister; so give ye all the heed ye may to her. But whereas I threatened him with ill from you, Biorn deemed the game a double one; but Frithiof said that the knave must be set on first, speaking thereby of King Ring."

So then the brethren arrayed them for departing; but, ere they went, they let bring Ingibjorg and eight women with her to Baldur's Meads, saying that Frithiof would not be so mad rash as to go see her thither, since there was none who durst make riot there.

Then fared those brethren south to Jadar, and met King Ring in Sogn-Sound.

Now, herewith was King Ring most of all wroth that the brethren had said that they accounted it a shame to fight with a man so old that he might not get a-horseback unholpen.

CHAPTER IV. Frithiof goes to Baldur's Meads.

Straightway whenas the kings were gone away Frithiof took his raiment of state and set the goodly gold ring on his arm; then went the foster-brethren down to the sea and launched Ellidi. Then said Biorn: "Whither away, foster-brother?"

"To Baldur's Meads," said Frithiof, "to be glad with Ingibjorg." Biorn said: "A thing unmeet to do, to make the gods wroth with us."

"Well, it shall be risked this time," said Frithiof; "and withal, more to me is Ingibjorg's grace than Baldur's grame."

Therewith they rowed over the firth, and went up to Baldur's Meads and to Ingibjorg's bower, and there she sat with eight maidens, and the new comers were eight also.

But when they came there, lo, all the place was hung with cloth of pall and precious webs.

Then Ingibjorg arose and said:

"Why art thou so overbold, Frithiof, that thou art come here without the leave of my brethren to make the gods angry with thee?"

Frithiof says: "Howsoever that may be, I hold thy love of more account than the gods' hate."

Ingibjorg answered: "Welcome art thou here, thou and thy men!"

Then she made place for him to sit beside her, and drank to him in the best of wine; and thus they sat and were merry together.

Then beheld Ingibjorg the goodly ring on his arm, and asked him if that precious thing were his own.

Frithiof said Yea, and she praised the ring much. Then Frithiof said:

"I will give thee the ring if thou wilt promise to give it to no one, but to send it to me when thou no longer shalt have will to keep it: and hereon shall we plight troth each to other."

So with this troth-plighting they exchanged rings.

Frithiof was oft at Baldur's Meads a-night time, and every day between whiles would he go thither to be glad with Ingibjorg.

CHAPTER V. Those Brethren come Home again.

Now tells the tale of those brethren, that they met King Ring, and he had more folk than they: then went men betwixt them, and sought to make peace, so that no battle should be: thereto King Ring assented on such terms that the brethren should submit them to him, and give him in marriage Ingibjorg their sister, with the third part of all their possessions.

The kings said Yea thereto, for they saw that they had to do with overwhelming might: so the peace was fast bound by oaths, and the wedding was to be at Sogn whenas King Ring should go see his betrothed.

So those brethren fare home with their folk, right ill content with things. But Frithiof, when he deemed that the brethren might be looked for home again, spake to the king's daughter:

"Sweetly and well have ye done to us, neither has goodman Baldur been wroth with us; but now as soon as ye wot of the kings' coming home, spread the sheets of your beds abroad on the Hall of the Goddesses, for that is the highest of all the garth, and we may see it from our stead."

The king's daughter said: "Thou dost not after the like of any other: but certes, we welcome dear friends whenas ye come to us."

So Frithiof went home; and the next morning he went out early, and when he came in then he spake and sang:

Now must I tell
To our good men
That over and done
Are our fair journeys;
No more a-shipboard
Shall we be going,
For there are the sheets
Spread out a-bleaching.

Then they went out, and saw that the Hall of the Goddesses was all thatched with white linen. Biorn spake and said: "Now are the kings come home, and but a little while have we to sit in peace, and good were it, meseems, to gather folk together."

So did they, and men came flocking thither.

Now the brethren soon heard of the ways of Frithiof and Ingibjorg, and of the gathering of men. So King Helgi spake:

"A wondrous thing how Baldur will bear what shame soever Frithiof and she will lay on him! Now will I send men to him, and wot what atonement he will offer us, or else will I drive him from the land, for our strength seemeth to me not enough that we should fight with him as now."

So Hilding, their fosterer, bare the king's errand to Frithiof and his friends, and spake in such wise: "This atonement the kings will have of thee, Frithiof, that thou go gather the tribute of the Orkneys, which has not been paid since Beli died, for they need money, whereas they are giving Ingibjorg their sister in marriage, and much of wealth with her."

Frithiof said: "This thing only somewhat urges us to peace, the good will of our kin departed; but no trustiness will those brethren show herein. But this condition I make, that our lands be in good

peace while we are away.” So this was promised and all bound by oaths.

Then Frithiof arrays him for departing, and is captain of men brave and of good help, eighteen in company.

Now his men asked him if he would not go to King Helgi and make peace with him, and pray himself free from Baldur’s wrath.

But he answered: “Hereby I swear that I will never pray Helgi for peace.”

Then he went aboard Ellidi, and they sailed out along the Sogn-nrth.

But when Frithiof was gone from home, King Halfdan spake to Helgi his brother: “Better lordship and more had we if Frithiof had payment for his masterful deed: now therefore let us burn his stead, and bring on him and his men such a storm on the sea as shall make an end of them.”

Helgi said it was a thing meet to be done.

So then they burned up clean all the stead at Foreness and robbed it of all goods; and after that sent for two witch-wives, Heidi and Hamglom, and gave them money to raise against Frithiof and his men so mighty a storm that they should all be lost at sea. So they sped the witch-song, and went up on the witch-mount with spells and sorcery.

CHAPTER VI. Frithiof Sails for the Orkneys.

SO when Frithiof and his men were come out of the Sognfirth there fell on them great wind and storm, and an exceeding heavy sea: but the ship drove on swiftly, for sharp built she was, and the best to breast the sea.

So now Frithiof sang:—

Of let I swim from Sogn
My tarred ship sooty-sided,
When maids sat o’er the mead-horn
Amidst of Baldur’s Meadows;
Now while the storm is wailing
Farewell I bid you maidens,
Still shall ye love us, sweet ones,
Though Ellidi the sea fill.

Said Biorn: “Thou mightest well find other work to do than singing songs over the maids of Baldur’s Meadows.”

“Of such work shall I not speedily run dry, though,” said Frithiof. Then they bore up north to the sounds nigh those isles that are called Solundir, and therewith was the gale at its hardest.

Then sang Frithiof:

Now is the sea a-swelling,
And sweepeth the rack onward;
Spells of old days cast o’er us
Make ocean all unquiet;
No more shall we be striving
Mid storm with wash of billows,
But Solundir shall shelter
Our ship with ice-beat rock-walls.

So they lay to under the lee of the isles high Solundir, and were minded to abide there; but straightway thereon the wind fell: then they turned away from under the lee of the islands, and now their voyage seemed hopeful to them, because the wind was fair awhile: but soon it began to freshen again.

Then sang Frithiof:

In days foredone
From Foreness strand
I rowed to meet
Maid Ingibiorg;
But now I sail
Through chilly storm
And wide away
My long-worm driveth.

And now when they were come far out into the main, once more the sea waxed wondrous troubled, and a storm arose with so great drift of snow, that none might see the stem from the stern; and they shipped seas, so that they must be ever a-baling. So Frithiof sang:

The salt waves see we nought
As seaward drive we ever
Before the witch-wrought weather,
We well-famed kings’-defenders:

Here are we all a-standing,
With all Solundir hull-down,
Eighteen brave lads a-baling
Black Ellidi to bring home.

Said Biorn: “Needs must he who fareth far fall in with diverse hap.”

“Yea, certes, foster-brother,” said Frithiof. And he sang withal:

Helgi it is that helpeth
The white-head billows’ waxing;
Cold time unlike the kissing
In the close of Baldur’s Meadow!
So is the hate of Helgi
To that heart’s love she giveth.
O would that here I held her,
Gift high above all giving!

“Maybe,” said Biorn, “she is looking higher than thou now art: what matter when all is said?”

“Well,” says Frithiof, “now is the time to show ourselves to be men of avail, though blither tide it was at Baldur’s Meadows.”

So they turned to in manly wise, for there were the bravest of men come together in the best ship of the Northlands. But Frithiof sang a stave:

So come in the West-sea,
Nought see I the billows,
The sea-water seemeth
As sweeping of wild-fire.
Topple the rollers,
Toss the hills swan-white,
Ellidi wallows
O’er steep of the wave-hills.

Then they shipped a huge sea, so that all stood a-baling. But Frithiof sang:

With love-moved mouth the maiden
Mepledgeth though I founder.
Ah! bright sheets lay a-bleaching,
East there on brents the swan loves.

Biorn said: “Art thou of mind belike that the maids of Sogn will weep many tears over thee?”

Said Frithiof: “Surely that was in my mind.”

Therewith so great a sea broke over the bows, that the water came in like the in-falling of a river; but it availed them much that the ship was so good, and the crew aboard her so hardy.

Now sang Biorn:

No widow, methinks,
To thee or me drinks;
No ring-bearer fair
Biddeth draw near;
Salt are our eyne
Soaked in the brine;
Strong our arms are no more,
And our eyelids smart sore.

Quoth Asmund: “Small harm though your arms be tried somewhat, for no pity we had from you when we rubbed our eyes whenas ye must needs rise early a-mornings to go to Baldu’s Meadows.”

“Well,” said Frithiof, “why singest thou not, Asmund?”

“Not I,” said Asmund; yet sang a ditty straightway:

Sharp work about the sail was
When o’er the ship seas tumbled,
And there was I a-working
Within-board ’gainst eight balers;
Better it was to bower,
Bringing the women breakfast,
Than here to be ’mid billows
Black Ellidi a-baling.

“Thou accountest thy help of no less worth than it is?” said Frithiof, laughing therewith; “but sure it showeth the thrall’s blood in thee that thou wouldst fain be awaiting at table.”

Now it blew harder and harder yet, so that to those who were aboard liker to huge peaks and mountains than to waves seemed the sea-breakers that crashed on all sides against the ship.

Then Frithiof sang:

On bolster I sat.
 In Baldur's Mead erst,
 And all songs that I could
 To the king's daughter sang;
 Now on Ran's bed belike
 Must I soon be a-lying,
 And another shall be
 By Ingibiorg's side.

Biorn said: "Great fear lieth ahead of us, foster-brother, and now dread hath crept into thy words, which is ill with such a good man as thou."

Says Frithiof: "Neither fear nor fainting is it, though I sing now of those our merry journeys; yet perchance more hath been said of them than need was: but most men would think death surer than life, if they were so bested as we be."

"Yet shall I answer thee somewhat," said Biorn, and sang:

Yet one gain have I gotten
 Thou gatst not 'mid thy fortune,
 For meet play did I make me
 With Ingibiorgs eight maidens;
 Red rings we laid together
 Aright in Baldur's Meadow,
 When far off was the warder
 Of the wide land of Halfdan.

"Well," said he, "we must be content with things as they are, foster-brother."

Therewith so great a sea smote them, that the bulwark was broken and both the sheets, and four men were washed overboard and all lost.

Then sang Frithiof:

Both sheets are bursten
 Amid the great billows,
 Four swains are sunk
 In the fathomless sea.

"Now, meseems," said Frithiof, "it may well be that some of us will go to the house of Ran, nor shall we deem us well sped if we come not thither in glorious array; wherefore it seems good to me that each man of us here should have somewhat of gold on him."

Then he smote asunder the ring, Ingibiorg's gift, and shared it between all his men, and sang a stave withal:

The red ring here I hew me
 Once owned of Halfdan's father,
 The wealthy lord of erewhile,
 Or the sea waves undo us,
 So on the guests shall gold be,
 If we have need of guesting;
 Meet so for mighty men-folk
 Amid Ran's hall to hold them.

"Not all so sure is it that we come there," said Biorn; "and yet it may well be so."

Now Frithiof and his folk found that the ship had great way on her, and they knew not what lay ahead, for all was mirk on either board, so that none might see the stem or stern from amidships; and therewith was there great drift of spray amid the furious wind, and frost, and snow, and deadly cold.

Now Frithiof went up to the masthead, and when he came down he said to his fellows: "A sight exceeding wondrous have I seen, for a great whale went in a ring about the ship, and I misdoubt me that we come nigh to some land, and that he is keeping the shore against us; for certes King Helgi has dealt with us in no friendly wise, neither will this his messenger be friendly. Moreover I saw two women on the back of the whale, and they it is who will have brought this great storm on us with the worst of spells and witchcraft; but now we shall try which may prevail, my fortune or their devilry, so steer ye at your straightest, and I will smite these evil things with beams."

Therewith he sang a stave:
 See I troll women
 Twain on the billows,
 Een they whom Helgi
 Hither hath sent.
 Ellidi now
 Or ever her way stop
 Shall smile the backs
 Of these asunder.

So tells the tale that this wonder went with the good ship Ellidi, that she knew the speech of man.

But Biorn said: "Now may we see the treason of those brethren against us." Therewith he took the tiller, but Frithiof caught up a forked beam, and ran into the prow, and sang a stave:

Ellidi, hail!
 Leap high o'er the billows!
 Break of the troll wives
 Brow or teeth now!
 Break cheek or jaw
 Of the cursed woman,
 One foot or twain
 Of the ogress filthy.

Therewith he drave his fork at one of the skin-changers, and the beak of Ellidi smote the other on the back, and the backs of both were broken; but the whale took the deep, and gat him gone, and they never saw him after.

Then the wind fell, but the ship lay waterlogged; so Frithiof called out to his men, and bade bale out the ship, but Biorn said:

"No need to work now, verily!"

"Be thou not afraid, foster-brother," said Frithiof, "ever was it the wont of good men of old time to be helpful while they might, whatsoever should come after." And therewith he sang a stave:

No need, fairfellows,
 To fear the death-day;
 Rather be glad,
 Good men of mine:
 For if dreams wot aught
 All nights they say
 I yet shall have
 My Ingibiorg.

Then they baled out the ship; and they were now come nigh unto land; but there was yet a flaw of wind in their teeth. So then did Frithiof take the two bow oars again, and rowed full mightily. Therewith the weather brightened, and they saw that they were come out to Effia Sound, and so there they made land.

The crew were exceeding weary; but so stout a man was Frithiof that he bore eight men a-land over the foreshore, but Biorn bore two, and Asmund one. Then sang Frithiof:

Fast bare I up
 To the fire-lit house
 My men all dazed
 With the drift of the storm;
 And the sail moreover
 To the sand I carried;
 With the might of the sea
 Is there no more to do.

CHAPTER VII. Frithiof at the Orkneys.

Now Earl Angantyr was at Effia whenas Frithiof and his folk came a-land there. But his way it was, when he was sitting at the drink, that one of his men should sit at the watch-window, looking weatherward from the drinking hall, and keep watch there. From a great horn drank he ever: and still as one was emptied another was filled for him. And he who held the watch when Frithiof came a-land was called Hallward; and now he saw where Frithiof and his men went, and sang a stave:

Men see I a-baling
 Amid the storm's might;
 Six bale on Ellidi
 Seven are a-rowing;
 Like is he in the stem,
 Straining hard at the oars,
 To Frithiof the bold,
 The brisk in the battle.

So when he had drunk out the horn, he cast it in through the window, and spake to the woman who gave him drink:

Take up from the floor,
 O fair-going woman,
 The horn cast adown
 Drunk out to the end!
 I behold men at sea
 Who, storm-beaten, shall need
 Help at our hands
 Ere the haven they make.

Now the Earl heard what Hallward sang; so he asked for tidings, and Hallward said: "Men are come a-land here, much forewearied, yet brave lads belike: but one of them is so hardy that he beareth the others. ashore."

Then said the Earl, "Go ye, and meet them, and welcome them in seemly wise; if this be Frithiof, the son of Hersir Thorstein, my friend, he is a man famed far and wide for all prowess."

Then there took up the word a man named Atli, a great viking, and he spake: "Now shall that be proven which is told of, that Frithiof hath sworn never to be first in the craving of peace."

There were ten men in company with him, all evil and outrageous, who often wrought berserksgang.

So when they met Frithiof they took to their weapons.

But Atli said:

"Good to turn hither, Frithiof! Clutching ernes should claw; and we no less, Frithiof! Yea, and now may'st thou hold to thy word, and not crave first for peace."

So Frithiof turned to meet them, and sang a stave:

Nay, nay, in nought
Now shall ye cow us.
Blenching hearts
Isle-abiders!
Alone with you ten
The fight will I try,
Rather than pray
For peace at your hands.

Then came Hallward thereto, and spake: "The Earl wills that ye all be made welcome here: neither shall any set on you."

Frithiof said he would take that with a good heart; howsoever he was ready for either peace or war.

So thereon they went to the Earl, and he made Frithiof and all his men right welcome, and they abode with him, in great honour holden, through the wintertide; and oft would the Earl ask of their voyage: so Biorn sang:

There baled we, wight fellows,
Washed over and over
On both boards
By billows;
For ten days we baled there,
And eight thereunto.

The Earl said: "Well nigh did the king undo you; it is ill seen of such-like kings as are meet for nought but to overcome men by wizardry. But now I wot," says Angantyr, "of thine errand hither, Frithiof, that thou art sent after the scat: whereto I give thee a speedy answer, that never shall King Helgi get scat of me, but to thee will I give money, even as much as thou wilt; and thou mayest call it scat if thou hast a mind to, or whatso else thou wilt."

So Frithiof said that he would take the money.

CHAPTER VIII. King Ring weddeth Ingibiorg.

Now shall it be told of what came to pass in Norway the while Frithiof was away: for those brethren let burn up all the stead at Foreness. Moreover, while the weird sisters were at their spells they tumbled down from off their high witch-mount, and brake both their backs.

That autumn came King Ring north to Sogn to his wedding, and there at a noble feast drank his bridal with Ingibiorg.

"Whence came that goodly ring which thou hast on thine arm?" said King Ring to Ingibiorg.

She said her father had owned it, but he answered and said:

"Nay, for Frithiof's gift it is: so take it off thine arm straightway; for no gold shalt thou lack whenas thou comest to Elfhome."

So she gave the ring to King Helgi's wife, and bade her give it to Frithiof when he came back.

Then King Ring wended home with his wife, and loved her with exceeding great love.

CHAPTER IX. Frithiof brings the Tribute to the Kings.

The spring after these things Frithiof departed from the Orkneys and Earl Angantyr in all good liking; and Hallward went with Frithiof.

But when they came to Norway they heard tell of the burning of Frithiof's stead.

So when he was gotten to Foreness, Frithiof said: "Black is my house waxen now; no friends have been at work here." And he sang withal:

Frank and free,
With my father dead,
In Foreness old
We drank aforetime.
Now my abode
Behold I burned;
For many ill deeds
The kings must I pay.

Then he sought rede of his men what was to be done; but they bade him look to it: then he said that the scat must first be paid out of hand. So they rowed over the Firth to Sowstrand; and there they heard that the kings were gone to Baldur's Meads to sacrifice to the gods; so Frithiof and Biorn went up thither, and bade Hallward and Asmund break up meanwhile all ships, both great and small, that were anigh; and they did so. Then went Frithiof and his fellow to the door at Baldur's Meads, and Frithiof would go in. Biorn bade him fare warily, since he must needs go in alone; but Frithiof charged him to abide without, and keep watch; and he sang a stave:

All alone go I
Unto the stead;
No folk I need
For the finding of kings;
But cast ye the fire
O'er the kings' dwellingly
If I come not again
In the cool of the even.

"Ah," said Biorn, "a goodly singing!"

Then went Frithiof in, and saw but few folk in the Hall of the Goddesses; there were the kings at their blood-offering, sitting a-drinking; a fire was there on the floor, and the wives of the kings sat thereby, a-warming the gods, while others anointed them, and wiped them with napkins.

So Frithiof went up to King Helgi and said: "Have here thy scat!"

And therewith he heaved up the purse wherein was the silver, and drave it on to the face of the king; whereby were two of his teeth knocked out, and he fell down stunned in his high seat; but Halfdan got hold of him, so that he fell not into the fire. Then sang Frithiof:

Have here thy scat,
High lord of the warriors!
Heed that and thy teeth,
Lest all tumble about thee!
Lo the silver abideth
At the bight of this bag here,
That Biorn and I
Betwixt us have borne thee.

Now there were but few folk in the chamber, because the drinking was in another place; so Frithiof went out straightway along the floor, and beheld therewith that goodly ring of his on the arm of Helgi's wife as she warmed Baldur at the fire; so he took hold of the ring, but it was fast to her arm, and he dragged her by it over the pavement toward the door, and Baldur fell from her into the fire; then Halfdan's wife caught hastily at Baldur, whereby the god that she was warming fell likewise into the fire, and the fire caught both the gods, for they had been anointed, and ran up thence into the roof, so that the house was all ablaze: but Frithiof got the ring to him ere he came out. So then Biorn asked him what had come of his going in there; but Frithiof held up the ring and sang a stave:

The heavy purse smote Helgi
Hard 'midst his scoundrel's visage:
Lowly bowed Halfdan's brother,
Fell bundling 'mid the high seat;
There Baldur fell a-burning.
But first my bright ring gat I.
Fast from the roaring fire
I dragged the bent crone forward.

Men say that Frithiof cast a firebrand up on to the roof, so that the hall was all ablaze, and therewith sang a stave:

Down stride we toward the sea-strand,
And strong deeds set a-going,
For now the blue flame bickers
Amidst of Baldur's Meadow.

And therewith they went down to the sea.

CHAPTER X. Frithiof made an Outlaw.

But as soon as King Helgi had come to himself he bade follow after Frithiof speedily, and slay them all, him and his fellows: "A man of forfeit life, who spareth no Place of Peace!"

So they blew the gathering for the kings' men, and when they came out to the hall they saw that it was afire; so King Halfdan went thereto with some of the folk, but King Helgi followed after Frithiof and his men, who were by then gotten a-shipboard and were lying on their oars.

Now King Helgi and his men find that all the ships are scuttled, and they have to turn back to shore, and have lost some men: then waxed King Helgi so wroth that he grew mad, and he bent his bow, and laid an arrow on the string, and drew at Frithiof so mightily that the bow brake asunder in the midst.

But when Frithiof saw that, then he gat him to the two bow oars of Ellidi, and laid so hard on them that they both brake, and with that he sang a stave:

Young Ingibiorg
Kissed I aforetime,
Kissed Beli's daughter
In Baldur's Meadow.
So shall the oars
Of Ellidi
Break both together
As Helgi's bow breaks.

Then the land-wind ran down the firth and they hoisted sail and sailed; but Frithiof bade them look to it that they might have no long abiding there. And so withal they sailed out of the Sognfirth, and Frithiof sang:

Sail we away from Sogn,
E'en as we sailed aforetime,
When flared the fire all over
The house that was my father's.
Now is the bale a-burning
Amidst of Baldur's Meadow:
But wend I as a wild-wolf,
Well wot I they have sworn it.

"What shall we turn to now, foster-brother?" said Biorn.

"I may not abide here in Norway," said Frithiof: "I will learn the ways of warriors, and sail a-warring."

So they searched the isles and out-skerries the summer long, and gathered thereby riches and renown; but in autumn-tide they made for the Orkneys, and Angantyr gave them good welcome, and they abode there through the winter-tide.

But when Frithiof was gone from Norway the kings held a Thing, whereat was Frithiof made an outlaw throughout their realm: they took his lands to them, moreover, and King Halfdan took up his abode at Foreness, and built up again all Baldur's Meadow, though it was long ere the fire was slaked there. This misliked King Helgi most, that the gods were all burned up, and great was the cost or ever Baldur's Meadow was built anew fully equal to its first estate.

So King Helgi abode still at Sowstrand.

CHAPTER XI. Frithiof fareth to see King Ring and Ingibiorg.

Frithiof waxed ever in riches and renown whithersoever he went: evil men he slew, and grimly strong-thieves, but husbandmen and chapmen he let abide in peace; and now was he called anew Frithiof the Bold; he had gotten to him by now a great company well arrayed, and was become exceeding wealthy of chattels.

But when Frithiof had been three winters a-warring he sailed west, and made the Wick; then he said that he would go a-land: "But ye shall fare a-warring without me this winter; for I begin to weary of warfare, and would fain go to the Uplands, and get speech of King Ring: but hither shall ye come to meet me in the summer, and I will be here the first day of summer."

Biorn said: "This counsel is naught wise, though thou must needs rule; rather would I that we fare north to Sogn, and slay both those kings, Helgi and Halfdan."

"It is all naught," said Frithiof; "I must needs go see King Ring and Ingibiorg."

Says Biorn: "Loth am I hereto that thou shouldst risk thyself alone in his hands; for this Ring is a wise man and of great kin, though he be somewhat old."

But Frithiof said he would have his own way: "And thou, Biorn, shalt be captain of our company meanwhile."

So they did as he bade, and Frithiof fared to the Uplands in the autumn, for he desired sore to look upon the love of King Ring and Ingibiorg. But or ever he came there he did on him, over his clothes, a great cloak all shaggy; two staves he had in his hand, and a mask over his face, and he made as if he were exceeding old.

So he met certain herdsmen, and, going heavily, he asked them: "Whence are ye?" They answered and said: "We are of Streitaland, whereas the king dwelleth."

Quoth the carle: "Is King Ring a mighty king, then?"

They answered: "Thou lookest to us old enough to have cunning to know what manner of man is King Ring in all wise."

The carle said that he had heeded salt-boiling more than the ways of kings; and therewith he goes up to the king's house.

So when the day was well worn he came into the hall, blinking about as a dotard, and took an outward place, pulling his hood over him to hide his visage.

Then spake King Ring to Ingibiorg: "There is come into the hall a man far bigger than other men."

The queen answered: "That is no such great tidings here."

But the king spake to a serving-man who stood before the board, and said: "Go thou, and ask yon cowed man who he is, whence he cometh, and of what kin he is."

So the lad ran down the hall to the new-comer and said: "What art thou called, thou man? Where wert thou last night? Of what kin art thou?"

Said the cowed man: "Quick come thy questions, good fellow! but hast thou skill to understand if I shall tell thee hereof?"

"Yea, certes," said the lad.

"Well," said the cowl-bearer, "Thief is my name, with Wolf was I last night, and in Grief-ham was I reared."

Then ran the lad back to the king, and told him the answer of the new-comer.

"Well told, lad," said the king; "but for that land of Grief-ham, I know it well: it may well be that the man is of no light heart, and yet a wise man shall he be, and of great worth I account him."

Said the queen: "A marvellous fashion of thine, that thou must needs talk so freely with every carle that cometh hither! Yea, what is the worth of him, then?"

"That wottest thou no clearer than I," said the king; "but I see that he thinketh more than he talketh, and is peering all about him."

Therewith the king sent a man after him, and so the cowl-bearer went up before the king, going somewhat bent, and greeted him in a low voice. Then said the king: "What art thou called, thou big man?"

And the cowl-bearer answered and sang:

Peace-thief they called me
On the prow with the Vikings;
But War-thief whenas
I set widows a-weeping;
Spear-thief when I
Sent forth the barbed shafts;
Battle-thief when I
Burst forth on the king;
Hel-thief when I
Tossed up the small babies:
Isle-thief when I
In the outer isles harried;
Slaws-thief when I
Sat aloft over men:
Yet since have I drifted
With salt-boiling carls,
Needy of help
Ere hither I came.

Said the king: "Thou hast gotten thy name of Thief from many a matter, then; but where wert thou last night, and what is thy home?"

The cowl-bearer said: "In Grief-ham I grew up; but heart drave me hither, and home have I nowhere."

The king said: "Maybe indeed that thou hast been nourished in Grief-ham a certain while; yet also maybe that thou wert born in a place of peace. But in the wild-wood must thou have lain last night, for no Goodman dwelleth anigh named Wolf; but whereas thou sayest thou hast no home, so is it, that thou belike deemest thy home nought, because of thy heart that drave thee hither."

Then spake Ingibiorg: "Go, Thief, get thee to some other harbour, or in to the guest-hall."

"Nay," said the king, "I am old enow to know how to marshal guests; so do off thy cowl, new-comer, and sit down on my other hand."

"Yea, old, and over old," said the queen, "when thou settest staff-carries by thy side."

"Nay, lord, it beseemeth not," said Thief; "better it were as the queen sayeth. I have been more used to boiling salt than sitting beside lords."

"Do thou my will," said the king, "for I will rule this time."

So Thief cast his cowl from him, and was clad thereunder in a dark blue kirtle; on his arm, moreover, was the goodly gold ring, and a thick silver belt was round about him, with a great purse on it, and therein silver pennies glittering; a sword was girt to his side, and he had a great fur hood on his head, for his eyes were bleared, and his face all wrinkled.

"Ah! now we fare better, say I," quoth the king; "but do thou, queen, give him a goodly mantle, well shapen for him."

"Thou shalt rule, my lord," said the queen; "but in small account do I hold this Thief of thine."

So then he gat a good mantle over him, and sat down in the high-seat beside the king.

The queen waxed red as blood when she saw the goodly ring, yet would she give him never a word; but the king was exceeding blithe with him and said: "A goodly ring hast thou on thine arm there; thou must have boiled salt long enough to get it."

Says he, "That is all the heritage of my father."

"Ah!" says the king, "maybe thou hast more than that; well, few salt-boiling carles are thy peers, I deem, unless eld is deep in mine eyes now."

So Thief was there through the winter amid good entertainment, and well accounted of by all men; he was bounteous of his wealth, and joyous with all men: the queen held but little converse with him; but the king and he were ever blithe together.

CHAPTER XII. Frithiof saves the King and Queen on the Ice.

The tale tells that on a time King Ring and the queen, and a great company, would go to a feast. So the king spake to Thief: "Wilt thou fare with us, or abide at home?"

He said he had liefer go; and the king said: "Then am I the more content."

So they went on their ways, and had to cross a certain frozen water. Then said Thief: "I deem this ice untrustworthy; meseemeth ye fare unwarily."

Quoth the king: "It is often shown how heedful in thine heart thou wilt be to us."

So a little after the ice broke in beneath them, and Thief ran thereto, and dragged the wain to him, with all that was therein; and the king and the queen both sat in the same: so Thief drew it all up on to the ice, with the horses that were yoked to the wain.

Then spake King Ring: "Right well drawn, Thief! Frithiof the Bold himself would have drawn no stronger had he been here; doughty followers are such as thou!"

So they came to the feast, and there is nought to tell thereof, and the king went back again with seemly gifts.

CHAPTER XIII. The King sleeps before Frithiof.

Now weareth away the mid-winter, and when spring cometh, the weather groweth fair, the wood bloometh, the grass groweth, and ships may glide betwixt land and land. So on a day the king says to his folk: "I will that ye come with us for our disport out into the woods, that we may look upon the fairness of the earth."

So did they, and went flock-meal with the king into the woods; but so it befell, that the king and Frithiof were gotten alone together afar from other men, and the king said he was heavy, and would fain sleep. Then said Thief: "Get thee home, then, lord, for it better beseemeth men of high estate to lie at home than abroad."

"Nay," said the king, "so will I not do." And he laid him down therewith, and slept fast, snoring loud.

Thief sat close by him, and presently drew his sword from his sheath and cast it far away from him.

A little while after the king woke up, and said: "Was it not so, Frithiof, that a many things came into thy mind e'en now? But well hast thou dealt with them, and great honour shalt thou have of me. Lo, now, I knew thee straightway that first evening thou earnest into our hall: now nowise speedily shalt thou depart from us; and somewhat great abideth thee."

Said Frithiof: "Lord king, thou hast done to me well, and in friendly wise; but yet must I get me gone soon, because my company cometh speedily to meet me, as I have given them charge to do."

So then they rode home from the wood, and the king's folk came flocking to him, and home they fared to the hall and drank joyously; and it was made known to all folk that Frithiof the Bold had been abiding there through the winter-tide.

CHAPTER XIV. King Ring's Gift to Frithiof.

Early of a morning-tide one smote on the door of that hall, wherein slept the king and queen, and many others: then the king asked who it was that called at the hall door; and so he who was without said: "Here am I, Frithiof; and I am arrayed for my departure."

Then was the door opened, and Frithiof came in, and sang a stave:

Have great thanks for the guesting
Thou gavest with all bounty;
Dight fully for wayfaring
Is the feeder of the eagle;
But, Ingidiorg, I mind thee
While yet on earth we tarry;
Live gloriously! I give thee
This gift for many kisses.

And therewith he cast the goodly ring towards Ingibiorg, and bade her take it.

The king smiled at this stave of his, and said: "Yea, forsooth, she hath more thanks for thy winter quarters than I; yet hath she not been more friendly to thee than I."

Then sent the king his serving-folk to fetch victuals and drink, and saith that they must eat and drink before Frithiof departed. "So arise, queen, and be joyful!" But she said she was loth to fall a-feasting so early.

"Nay, we will eat all together," said King Ring; and they did so. But when they had drank a while King Ring spake: "I would that thou abide here, Frithiof; for my sons are but children and I am old, and unmeet for the warding of my realm, if any should bring war against it." Frithiof said: "Speedily must I be gone, lord." And he sang:

Oh, live, King Ring,
Both long and hale!
The highest king
Neath heaven's skirt!
Ward well, O king,
Thy wife and land,
For Ingibiorg now
Never more shall I meet.

Then quoth King Ring:

Fare not away,
O Frithiof, thus,
With downcast heart,

O dearest of chieftains!
 For now will I give thee
 For all thy good gifts,
 Far better things
 Than thou wottest thyself.

And again he sang:

To Frithiof the famous
 My fair wife I give,
 And all things therewith
 That are unto me.

Then Frithiof took up the word and sang:

Nay, how from thine hands
 These gifts may I have,
 But if thou hast fared
 By the last way of fate.

The king said: "I would not give thee this, but that I deem it will soon be so, for I sicken now. But of all men I would that thou shouldst have the joy of this; for thou art the crown of all Norway. The name of king will I give thee also; and all this, because Ingibiorg's brethren would begrudge thee any honour; and would be slower in getting thee a wife than I am."

Said Frithiof: "Have all thanks, lord, for thy goodwill beyond that I looked for! but I will have no higher dignity than to be called earl."

Then King Ring gave Frithiof rule over all his realm in due wise, and the name of earl therewith; and Frithiof was to rule it until such time as the sons of King Ring were of age to rule their own realm. So King Ring lay sick a little while, and then died; and great mourning was made for him; then was there a mound cast over him, and much wealth laid therein, according to his bidding.

Thereafter Frithiof made a noble feast, whereunto his folk came; and thereat was drunken at one and the same time the heritage feast after King Ring, and the bridal of Frithiof and Ingibiorg.

After these things Frithiof abode in his realm, and was deemed therein a most noble man; he and Ingibiorg had many children.

CHAPTER XV. Frithiof King in Sogn.

Now those kings of Sogn, the brethren of Ingibiorg, heard these tidings, how that Frithiof had gotten a king's rule in Ringrealm, and had wedded Ingibiorg their sister. Then says Helgi to Halfdan, his brother, that unheard of it was, and a deed over-bold, that a mere hersir's son should have her to wife: and so thereat they gather together a mighty army, and go their ways therewith to Ringrealm, with the mind to slay Frithiof, and lay all his realm under them.

But when Frithiof was ware of this, he gathered folk, and spake to the queen moreover: "New war is come upon our realm; and now, in whatso wise the dealings go, fain am I that thy ways to me grow no colder."

She said: "In such wise have matters gone that I must needs let thee be the highest."

Now was Biorn come from the east to help Frithiof; so they fared to the fight, and it befell, as ever erst, that Frithiof was the foremost in the peril: King Helgi and he came to handy-blows, and there he slew King Helgi.

Then bade Frithiof raise up the Shield of Peace, and the battle was stayed; and therewith he cried to King Halfdan: "Two choices are in thine hands now, either that thou give up all to my will, or else gettest thou thy bane like thy brother; for now may men see that mine is the better part."

So Halfdan chose to lay himself and his realm under Frithiof's sway; and so now Frithiof became ruler over Sogn-folk, and Halfdan was to be Hersir in Sogn and pay Frithiof tribute, while Frithiof ruled Ringrealm. So Frithiof had the name of King of Sogn-folk from the time that he gave up Ringrealm to the sons of King Ring, and thereafter he won Hordaland also. He and Ingibiorg had two sons, called Gunthiof and Hunthiof, men of might, both of them.

AND SO HERE ENDETH THE STORY OF FRITHIOF THE BOLD.